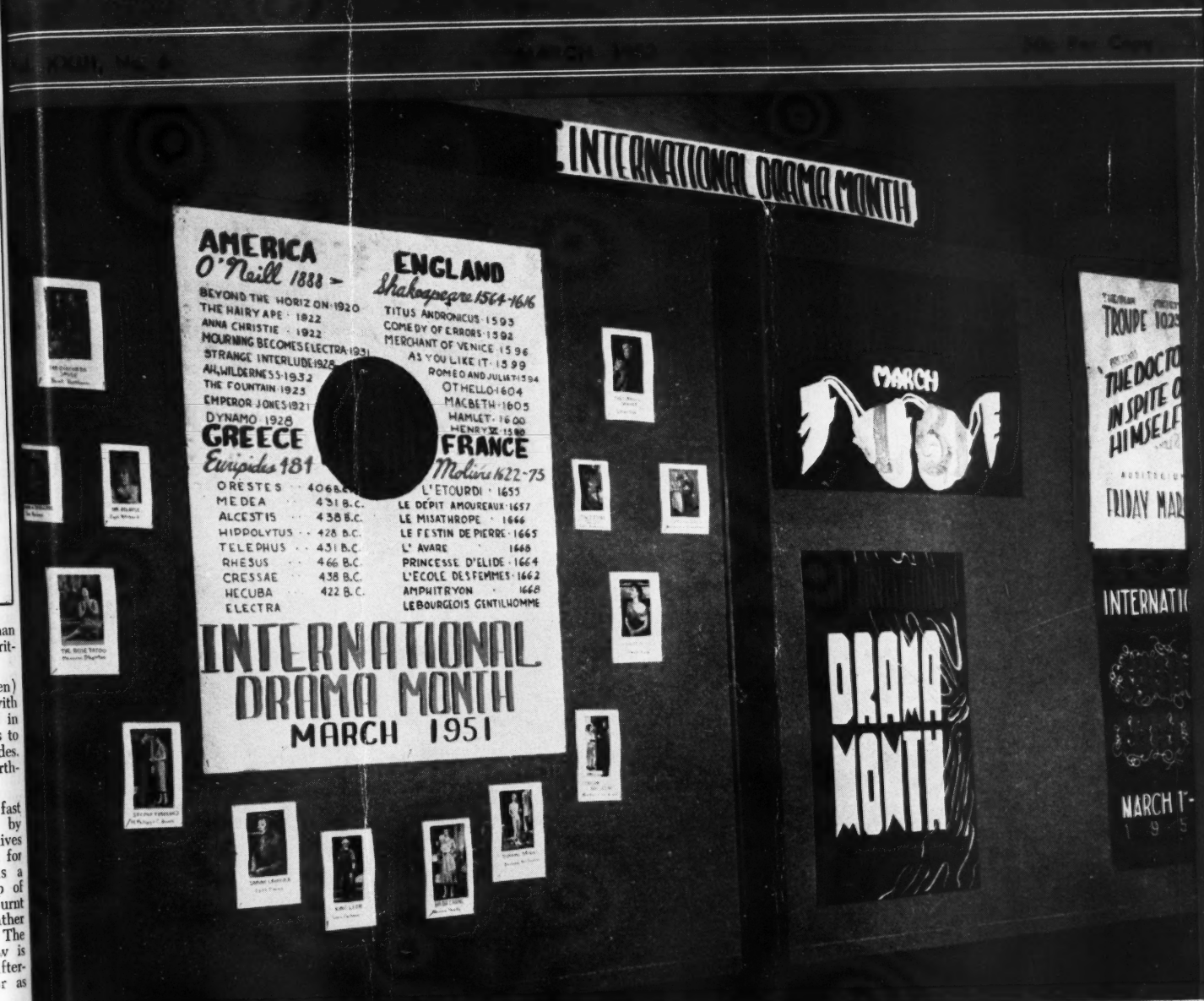


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An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts



An exhibit in observance of International Theatre Month (1951), prepared and photographed by Dramatic Arts Students of Dunbar High School (Thespian Troupe 1023), Washington, D. C., Maude Allen, Sponsor.

IN THIS ISSUE

UP AND COMING

By PAUL MYERS

DIRECTING: PRE-REHEARSAL PLANNING

By JOHN W. HALLAUER

THEATRE OF JAPAN

By LINLEY M. STAFFORD

BUILDING SUPERIOR MEN AND WOMEN

By KARL F. ROBINSON

14 YEAR SUMMARY OF PLAYS PRODUCED BY THESPIAN TROUPES

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CONTENTS

SERIES

- Up and Coming by Paul Myers 12
Directing: Pre-Rehearsal Planning by John W. Hallauer 14

ARTICLES

- Theatre of Japan by Linley M. Stafford 8
Building Superior Men and Women by Karl F. Robinson 10

FEATURES

- As I See It 3
In This Issue 4
14 Year Summary of Plays Produced by Thespian Troupes 11
Ohio Regional Conference 13
Thespian Eastern Conference 13
Thespian Chatter 24

DEPARTMENTS

- Theatre on Broadway by Paul Myers 18
Dialing Around (Radio, Television) by Si Mills 19
Staging Abe Lincoln in Illinois (Play of the Month) by Diane Draper and Mary Lou Le Fors 20
Shooting the Works (Screen) by H. Kenn Carmichael 22
Brief Views by Talbot Pearson 32

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TOP GUYS!

Our best wishes for a very successful year to our friend William P. Halstead of the University of Michigan, the newly-elected president of the American Educational Theatre Association. To Barnard Hewitt of the University of Illinois, who is the program chairman for the 1952 convention scheduled here in Cincinnati next December, our society extends our wholehearted cooperation. Our hats are off to Lee Mitchell of Northwestern University, AETA's 1951 president, for his excellent leadership during the past year.

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This month Thespian troupes throughout our country will be celebrating International Theatre Month. Theatre is an excellent medium by which international understanding can be encouraged. The National Thespian Society is proud of its role in this ever-growing cast.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. William Currier Atkinson,
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In This Issue



TO you sophomore and junior Thespians I recommend you read carefully *Building Superior Men and Women* by Karl F. Robinson, Professor of Speech Education, Northwestern University. In his article you will learn about The National High School Institute of which Prof. Robinson is director. If I were eligible, I would try to persuade Mother and Dad to let me apply for admission. To me this institute is most practical because it is offered to high school students while they are still in high school.

AS a number of our Thespian boys may find themselves in Japan in a few years, Linley M. Stafford's article, *Theatre of Japan*, will be of especial interest. This article, in addition to our cover picture, is our contribution to International Theatre Month. Mr. Stafford is a member of the National Thespian Society, having been initiated into Troupe 401, Foundation School, Berea, Kentucky, several years ago, when that troupe was under the sponsorship of Earl W. Blank, now our editor of *The Play of the Month* department. Mr. Stafford is now in the army, has been stationed in Japan since August, 1950. So thrilled were we with Mr. Stafford's pictures that we included all he submitted. Don't skip this article!

AFTER a careful study of the Annual Play Summaries published by DRAMATICS each year since 1937, we are including in this issue a statistical summary covering 14 years. We believe this report serves two purposes: It shows that high schools are presenting the better plays and it is an excellent guide for play selecting.

DIANE DRAPER and Mary Lou Le Fors, Thespians of Troupe 745, Helena, Montana, High School, are the authors of *Staging "Abe Lincoln in Illinois,"* our play of the month. To my knowledge this is the first time Dr. Earl W. Blank, our editor of this department, has submitted an article written by high school students. They have done a superb job, for which I want to thank Doris Marsolais Marshall, Thespian Sponsor and Faculty Director of this play, for using this method. I'll wager she played a very prominent part in guiding these youthful authors in the composition of this article.

PROGRAMS of our two Regional Conferences are included this month — the Ohio Regional Conference at Youngstown and the Second Eastern Regional Conference at Reading, Pa. Read them to see what you'll miss if you do not attend — and then ask permission to go!

MR. HALLAUER in his series of articles on *Play Festivals* turns his attention now to directing. Paul Myers stresses the "up-and-coming" actors of today. Tallulah Bankhead with her *Big Show* and *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* are featured in Si Mills's article. Mr. Myers is enthusiastic about the new, old musical, *Pal Joey*, and H. Kenn Carmichael gives you some more inside information of the movie industry.

Take your time to read the articles — the next issue is a month away.

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Bob Gardner—school hero, athletic star but low-mark scholar—might be any one of the thousands of boys who will graduate this June. Irene Davis, loyal and far-sighted, could be the nice girl in the next block. We've all met Agnes Wagner, the hanger-on, the successful schemer. These young people and their friends are as real as the Class Day picture. They are the high school seniors of today—they are *your* June Graduates of 1952.

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book by Graeme and Sarah Lorimer.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Maudie happens to see her agonized expression in the mirror and takes a good look at it, so she'll know how to make it again if ever she wants to. There are lots of reasons for her misery. First, she was put in charge of a pretty but tongue-tied cousin named Joy. Maudie decides the only way to help is to teach Joy her entire line. Maudie is delighted as she thinks of how grateful Joy is going to be for the happiness she's bringing into her life. But now she exclaims, "Gratitude! I still laugh, though no longer bitterly," for Joy has taken Maudie's delightful and humorous line and used it so well she snares almost all of Maudie's boyfriends. Then to Maudie's horror, she finds her older sister Sylvia discussing plans for inviting the last boy Maudie has left to her table at a party. Maudie feels she's got to take action quickly, for no matter how faithful a boy may be in his soul, he's sure to feel awfully flattered if some older girl takes an interest in him. The mental picture of Sylvia scooping up the only boyfriend Maudie has left swims before her eyes. She decides that

the only way to get Sylvia out of her life is to marry her off. She artfully confides in two older boys that she's brooding about "love and marriage and motherhood and what is Sylvia getting out of life after all."

Maudie decides that her sister's excellent reputation is too drab and colorless, and something has to be done about it. Maudie starts drawing on the movies she's seen, and the most lurid novels she's read. She tells these things as though they were all a part of her sister's earlier life. This is the beginning of a series of uproarious maneuvers to marry off her sister. Maudie gets results, too — her sister's serious romance is put on the rocks, the family is infuriated at Maudie, and even her own boyfriend is alienated completely. Every effort Maudie makes to fix things up again somehow gets her even deeper in trouble. It almost seems as though the trouble is really serious, but then in an engaging and wholly satisfying conclusion, this fresh and exciting comedy is resolved.

PRICE, 75c • ROYALTY, \$25.00 • POSTERS

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES REVIEW . . .

" . . . one of the most genuinely light-hearted that have appeared in recent seasons. A rollicking comedy of the younger generation. The amorous experiments, triumphs, and misadventures of their sub-deb heroine are unfailingly diverting."

FROM THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL . . .

"The Lorimers have the knack of catching the sub-deb off guard, and presenting her, with all her foibles and all her irresistible magnetism to her own generation."

PUBLISHING CO.

CHICAGO 16, ILLINOIS



A Takarazuka Opera "boy" actor. The girls are selected to play boy parts because of their height and quality of voice. Off-stage they are definitely the feminine type.

THE six years since the end of the last war has seen the recovery of the entertainment world in Japan. At the close of the war practically every form of theatre had been suspended due to military restrictions or lack of working funds. Now, however, an American who has the opportunity to visit Japan has a chance to see one of the most unique theatre seasons available in the world today.

One of the first places visited by tourists in Japan is the Kabuki Theatre. There a foreigner can see an evening of drama that has not changed in content, method of production, in style of costume and make-up, for over 300 years.

THEATRE of JAPAN

By LINLEY M. STAFFORD

It is indeed one of the greatest experiences a theatre lover can have.

Kabuki is not drama as we know it in the Western sense. It is instead a type of acting based on the arts of singing and dancing. A classical story is told by narration, singing, dancing and spectacular scenes of pomp and pageantry that have not been seen in Europe since the days of the masques. The stories, many of them pre-dating Shakespeare, deal with great war lords, ancient folk legends or the life of samurai warriors, the Japanese version of knights in shining armor.

Kabuki was originally founded over four centuries ago by an actress by the name of Okuni. In its original form Kabuki was not a drama at all but a kind of primitive dance called Nem-buttsu Odori, or "prayer dance."

It wasn't long until the form had been taken over by male actors and features of Noh drama, a classical play of music and dance, and the puppet drama were incorporated in Kabuki. Through the centuries the drama has been enriched in content and style until today it is one of the most highly refined examples of theatre art in the world.

The most characteristic feature of Kabuki is that all parts are played by men. The most handsome men of the troupe are trained from youth to play the parts of women. Since the dramas are so highly stylized, the men, who study every movement, every expression



The typical Takarazuka costume is elaborate and colorful. They usually adapt native costumes, adding sparkle and color not found in the originals.

of women, play the parts more accurately than women could.

An actual Kabuki performance, which usually begins at four in the afternoon, is intriguing for the Westerner. The Kabuki curtain, a pull-type cotton curtain that is striped with thick lines of green, red-brown and black, is pulled aside amid the sounds of wood blocks being knocked together and the shrill sound of a samisan, a stringed instrument that furnishes the background for the singing and dancing. The scenery that is revealed is unbelievably elaborate. Everything, down to the most minor detail, is perfect. It is a rare experience to see the giant stage converted into a side of a mountain in a snow storm and then, a few minutes later, changed to a highly stylized interior of a war lord's castle. Such elaborate scenery is possible in Japan because of the low labor costs. It would be financially impossible for an American producer to have 20 or 30 complete sets for each play produced. The basic designs of the sets are the same as the ones used during the "golden age" of Kabuki 200 years ago, but the actual scenes are new because the originals were destroyed by the fire.

The Kabuki stages are vast. In the Tokyo Kabuki Theatre—it was gutted by fire during the burning of Tokyo during the war and not restored until the fall of 1950—the stage measures about 70 feet across and has a proscenium arch about 25 feet. In Osaka, the only other city in Japan where there is a theatre devoted exclusively to Kabuki, the stage is the largest in the Orient. These stages are equipped with revolving stages, "seriage" or elevator



A typical scene from *Spring Dance*, a presentation featuring the cherry blossoms in the spring. The actresses are made up to look like Maiko-sans, young Geisha girls, who dance the spring dance throughout Japan at cherry blossom time.



A scene from the lavish review, **Arabian Nights**, produced by Takarazuka Opera Group. The production had 26 scenes just as elaborate as the one shown.

stages, and ramps that extend from the left side of the stage to the rear of the auditorium. The ramps are used when the plot calls for a long journey, when the actors want to make dramatic exits and for the pageants that include long parades of actors in colorful costumes. Elevator stages are used for the entrance of samurai warriors who always enter from under the stage. It is interesting to note that the first revolving stage was used in Kabuki as early as 1773. The large number of elaborate scenes within a drama demands such stage apparatus.

Like the scenery, the costumes in Kabuki are costly and beautiful. Many of the gold and silver thread embroidered kimonos are handed down from one generation of actors to another and cared for like precious gems. The color and design of the costumes, coupled with the beautiful scenery, give Kabuki a pageantry that has become its trade mark.

Most foreigners are a little dazed by the Kabuki dramas. The long passages of narration, where the action is told to the audience, have little action. In these parts, the smallest movement of a finger, the tilt of the head, the flutter of an eye lash, has meaning to the knowing Kabuki fan. These narrations are broken by the dancing, the singing of the chorus and the parades of actors across the stage and up the ramp. The performances evoke the adjectives "wonderful," "amazing," and "spectacular" from the Americans who return again and again to the Kabuki theatres.

For the foreigner who doesn't care for the classical Kabuki, Japan has another type of theatre for their taste. This is the Takarazuka Opera Group. This theatre is just the opposite to Kabuki for it is made up of all women actors.

The Takarazuka opera was founded 37 years ago in a small hot springs spa near Osaka. It was the outgrowth of a dancing school for girls. It now has grown to a point where it maintains four troupes of 100 girls each who tour Japan with a new play every month.

The home of Takarazuka opera is still at the spa where they have built a theatre plant that would rival Radio City Music Hall. Aside from the school that trains 30 new girls for the troupe every year, the Takarazuka opera maintains a 4,000 seat Grand Theatre where the new plays are produced and given their initial showing, a smaller theatre

for dance recitals, a zoo, six restaurants and a movie house.

Takarazuka really isn't an opera as its name implies. The performances are more in the genre of Broadway musicals. A typical Takarazuka review consists of over 30 scenes, including ballet sequences, Rockette-like chorus dancing, solo and chorus singing, comedy acts and straight dramatic scenes. Unlike the Kabuki, the plays produced by Takarazuka are originals. They deal with folk legends of China and Japan, stories of victorious samurai warriors, modern family comedies and just plain review numbers that have no story line. They also adapt stories from Western literature, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Arabian Nights* and other established stories. These are dressed up, altered to give an opportunity for dancing and singing. Most of the musical scores are also original but one often hears strains of Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and other American composers incorporated in the scores.

Like Kabuki, Takarazuka is elaborately staged. The costumes worn by the girls are beautiful, the scenery magnificent. Again, the revolving and elevator stages are used, along with the most up-to-date lighting equipment. Low labor costs make such productions possible. A 30 scene review, utilizing 10 stars and 90 members of the chorus, plus a 30 piece orchestra, directors and scene designers, costs about 15,000 American dollars to produce. Compare that to a Broadway show of 17 scenes which costs as high as \$300,000.

It is evident from both Kabuki and Takarazuka that the Japanese audiences

(Continued on page 31)



A scene showing the singers (upper left), the samisen players (upper right) and a chorus of dancers at one of the Kabuki performances. The central figure is the star of the production; he is playing the part of a wealthy land owner.



Class project in dramatics from **The Happy Journey**, National High School Institute, Northwestern University.

THERE were ten letters on my desk when I arrived at the office. I thumbed through them quickly. One was from Texas; another from Michigan; a third from New Jersey; a fourth bore an Oklahoma postmark. From the return addresses in the upper left-hand corners of the envelopes I noted they came from parents of former members of the National High School Institute or from students themselves. The first, from a student, read as follows:

The purpose of this letter is to tell you what I am doing and to thank you. Everything I learned at Northwestern is now being put into practice. Some of the ideas I got from other "Cherubs" and my instructors, I'm now using in my own radio show on our local station. Much of my other information and skill I am using to contribute all I can to the dramatics and radio program in my high school.

I remember telling you at the final dance how much I was going to miss those five wonderful weeks. Then I didn't realize how much, for you see, I know now what you meant by "intangible rewards." I have always felt that besides pursuing a specific career, we all are striving to be mature, tolerant people. The Institute has elevated me one plane higher than I was, and has given me an incentive to continue to achieve my professional and personal goals. For these things I shall always be grateful to you.

The next was written by a parent whose son had attended the previous summer:

Both Mr. J. and myself feel that the Institute was a very worth-while experience, not only from the educational standpoint, but from the social adjustment angle, as well. For those planning to attend college it is of exceptional value. The fact that it precedes college by a year is also an excellent idea.

You and your staff are to be commended for the wonderful job you are doing. We are especially proud that our son had this wonderful opportunity.

The third, also from a parent, expressed somewhat similar ideas.

The fourth was from a former student, who had not written in some time:

By now, I am sure that it will be difficult for you to remember me. After so many hundreds of Cherubs have gone through the University I certainly won't expect you to. I attended during the summer of 1948.

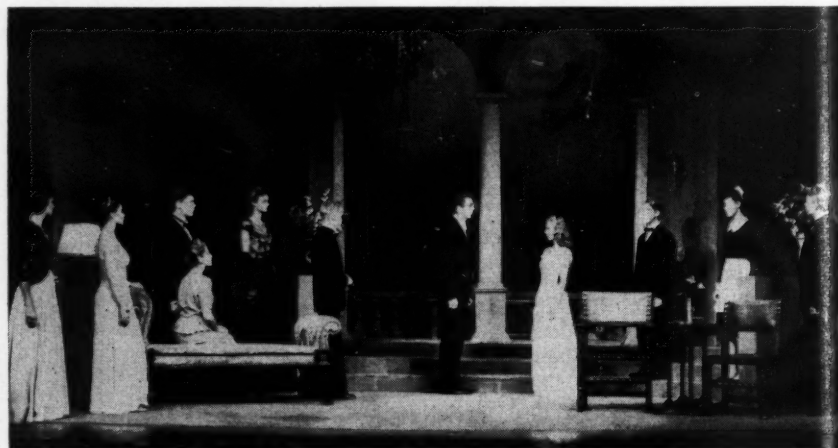
Now I am attending the University here at home and am working at the NBC station during my spare time.

Every day I find some reason to remember the valuable and practical lessons I learned in my courses during that summer. They are invaluable both in my job and in writing my own weekly radio show, a thirty-minute women's specialty program.

Someday I hope to be able to return to Northwestern and thank you and my instructors in person. Until then, I hope that this brief note of appreciation will tell you at least in part how much I enjoyed that wonderful summer.

These are representative of the many letters which have been coming to us for over twenty years. More than the letters, the students themselves through their achievements have convinced us that the National High School Institute is making a significant contribution not only to their special interests and professional careers, but also to their general education. *We feel that we are building a higher type of American womanhood and manhood.*

This purpose underlay the early days of the Institute. Dean Ralph Dennis affectionately dubbed these youngsters "Cherubs" in the first year of the Institute. "We call them Cherubs, because they ain't," was his observation. Actually he was merely describing typical stem-winding boys or girls who populate our secondary schools, and furnish



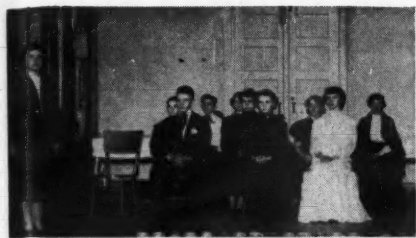
Death Takes a Holiday, National High School Institute.

BUILDING SUPERIOR MEN and WOMEN

By **KARL F. ROBINSON**

all teachers who encounter them the real thrill of teaching. We at Northwestern are grateful for the continued challenge which this program affords us to help young people.

This summer will mark the twenty-second consecutive session of the National High School Institute in Speech. Since 1930, over 2000 students from almost every state in the country have attended the three divisions of the program—Dramatics, Debate and Public Speaking and Radio. Last year 120 pupils from thirty states were enrolled. Each summer these grand youngsters practically take over the Speech section of the campus in their earnest efforts to cooperate with their faculty of 30 members in fulfilling the purposes of this interesting summer school. First among these goals is that of the personal development and growth of boys and girls. Second is the objective of service to the speech programs in the high schools these students represent. This is possible because their training takes place in the summer between the junior and senior years. Everything they learn can be invested in the final year of their high school education. Third is the objective of giving each student a preview of college or university study and life. These goals are all accomplished through the philosophy and motivation behind the Institute, the careful selection of students and faculty, the regular program of studies, life in the dormitories, the trips and co-curricular experiences, social affairs, together with



Scene from Troupe 221's production of *Our Town*, Baker, Oregon, Senior High School, Jean Mizer, Sponsor.

careful, intelligent supervision and administration of the course.

The underlying philosophy is that interested, eager students will learn readily if the emphasis is placed upon their development and if challenging situations are presented which give them the opportunities to gain knowledge and develop skills. *There is no stress placed upon grades or upon passing or failing.* Awards are given for superior work, however. The various types of speech experiences present the challenging situations which are interesting, enjoyable and definitely applicable in the daily life of the students. The various kinds of group activities provide rich territory for their learning to make adjustments and meet new problems which arise in away-from-home circumstances.

Students are selected because *they want* to come to the Institute. As a group they are definitely in the "eager beaver" class. They are the types of pupils who want to know *all* of the answers to *all* of the questions. Having achieved this aim, they relax briefly to think of more questions. Scholarship, interest and a genuine desire to work hard and develop are basic criteria for student selection. Previous participation and experience in speech are also important, but many students are included who will personally profit from the experience of attending so that they may take with them their new information and abilities to enrich their own lives and contribute to the programs of their high schools.

The development of the student is directly implemented first through an extensive class program of speech training. Each student enrolls in one of the three divisions of the Institute. All students take one hour daily in Training of the Speaking Voice and in Public Speaking. Each division also includes certain kinds of specialized instruction. In debate these are Forms of Public Address and a Forensics Laboratory, each meeting two hours daily. In Radio they are Announcing, Continuity Writing and Radio Production, the latter for two hours a day. The Dramatics students have the largest range of instruction, which consists of Stage Make-up, Stagecraft and Acting, each meeting in two-hour sessions. Radio and Drama persons may also elect a special course in Interpretation.

14 YEAR SUMMARY OF PLAYS PRESENTED BY THESPIAN TROUPES

Starting with the school year 1937-38 and continuing each year thereafter, the National Thespian Society published in *DRAMATICS*, its official organ, a summary of all full-length plays reported by its member schools during each regular school season. Listed below is a general summary of full-length plays as they were listed annually over a period of 14 years.

The following are included: the number of years the play appeared in the summary (not necessarily consecutive); total performances for all the years; and the last year the play was included. In comparing the summary of 1937-38 with that of 1950-51 one must take into consideration that in the former less than 500 schools were members of the National Thespian Society, while in the latter 1163 schools were members. In the earlier years a play had to be produced only five times to be included, while in the latter 10 or more productions were required. The date a play was released for amateur production must also be considered before any final conclusions can be drawn.

It is interesting to note that only one play appeared in the annual summary for 13 consecutive years, *YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU*; that others appeared consecutively for several years and then disappeared; and that others appeared spasmodically; as, *THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 16*, which was listed first in 1937-38, then in 1940-41, in 1942-43, in 1946-47 and thereafter.

Only plays which appeared in the 1950-51 summary are included in the three and two year summaries. Plays which appeared in the summary for the first time last season are not included as that summary was published in the October (1951) issue.

Title of Play	Years	Last Appearance	Total Performances
YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU	13	1950-51	212
LITTLE WOMEN	11	1950-51	127
OUR TOWN	9	1950-51	125
DON'T TAKE MY PENNY	8	1947-48	120
NIGHT OF JANUARY 16	8	1950-51	94
BROTHER GOOSE	7	1949-50	108
ARSENIC AND OLD LACE	7	1950-51	106
WHAT A LIFE	6	1949-50	128
JUNIOR MISS	6	1949-50	105
SPRING FEVER	6	1947-48	68
SEVEN SISTERS	6	1948-49	45
A DATE WITH JUDY	5	1950-51	191
OUR HEARTS WERE YOUNG			
AND GAY	5	1950-51	186
EVER SINCE EVE	5	1945-46	150
JUNE MAD	5	1944-45	120
JANUARY THAW	5	1950-51	106
THE FIGHTING LITTLES	5	1947-48	71
BEST FOOT FORWARD	5	1947-48	71
GROWING PAINS	5	1942-43	62
STAGE DOOR	5	1950-51	39
WE SHOOK THE FAMILY TREE	4	1950-51	145
NINE GIRLS	4	1948-49	52
THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER	4	1949-50	45
FOOT LOOSE	4	1944-45	44
MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS	3	1950-51	89
DEAR RUTH	3	1950-51	80
I REMEMBER MAMA	3	1950-51	61
ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN	3	1950-51	49
GEORGE WASHINGTON			
SLEPT HERE	3	1950-51	35
MOTHER IS A FRESHMAN	2	1950-51	102
SEVENTEENTH SUMMER	2	1950-51	72
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE	2	1950-51	22

The co-curricular activities are an outgrowth of class work in each division. In the Debate section the study of group discussion culminates in a public demonstration discussion which is open to the entire summer session. The class debates conclude with a final championship debate, held so that outside students in the university, as well as high school students and coaches may attend. Many parents also come to this event. The national high school question is used; judging is done by members of the School of Speech faculty. Each summer these Institute debaters

also prepare their own syllabus of materials they have collected and organized during the course. Radio students air at least two shows they have prepared, the outlets being WEAW in Evanston, and WNUR, the University station. Four students from all divisions are selected each summer to present the now traditional program, "What Do Our Teen-Agers Think of America's Future?" over the *Northwestern University Reviewing Stand* on WGN and the Mutual Network.

In Dramatics every effort is made to

(Continued on page 30)

UP and COMING

By PAUL MYERS

LARGELY abetted by novels about the theatre and by Hollywood, a popular misconception has grown concerning the birth of a theatre star. We all know the tale of the ambitious young actress who happens to be in the producer's office when word is received that Mme. Actress will not be able to go on that night. The aforementioned young actress knows all the lines of the role and goes on without rehearsal. Such tales are most misleading. A new star quite often shoots into the public eye, but it is fairly safe to assume that much hard work has been expended on her training and that behind the sensational new part there have been years of substantial experience.

One of the newest young stars is Julie Harris, who is currently playing Sally Bowles in John van Druten's dramatization of Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories*. The play is called *I Am a Camera* and is housed in the Empire Theatre—the most tradition laden theatre among the Broadway playhouses. The lobby of this house is hung with portraits of the great who have played there. Ethel Barrymore, Katharine Cornell, Helen Hayes, Ethel Waters, John Drew, Leslie Howard, Dorothy Stickney, Maude Adams look down from their places of honor upon the gathering playgoers. It would not be too surprising if a portrait of Julie Harris soon joins this group.

Miss Harris was born in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, on Christmas, 1925. She attended a boarding school in Rhode Island, Miss Hewitt's School in New York and the Yale Drama School. Somewhere too during her school period she spent a season in summer stock. It was while attending classes at Yale that she landed her first Broadway part. This was in a comedy by Curt Goetz and Dorian Otvos, which opened at the Playhouse, New York, March 12, 1945. Ward Morehouse reported in the pages of the *NEW YORK SUN* the following afternoon: "It's a Gift, which opened cold last night, is a friendly little play, funny in spots, but ambling and slapstick for most of the way, and it has all appearances of being another Broadway transient."

The production lasted for only forty-

seven performances, but it gave Julie Harris a taste for acting on Broadway. Most of the aisle-sitters mentioned her presence in their review and Robert Coleman, the critic for the *NEW YORK DAILY MIRROR*, did a bit more. "Julie Harris, the eldest of the Herrmann children, is easy on the eyes and has a pleasing personality," Mr. Coleman reported. "There should be a future for her on Broadway."

I find no other records of Miss Harris' activities for over a year. In the spring of 1946 she did walk-ons with the visiting Old Vic Company. Many of you will recall the visit of this celebrated English troupe headed by Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, Margaret Leighton and Joyce Redman. They presented both parts of Shakespeare's *King Henry IV*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* on a double bill with Sheridan's *The Critic* and Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. Working with this company, though in very small roles, must have been a magnificent experience for the young actress.

In the fall of that year, we find our heroine playing with Burgess Meredith in a revival of *The Playboy of the Western World*. She followed this engagement with the role of one of the three weird sisters in the production of *Macbeth*, which starred Flora Robson and Michael Redgrave. Presented by Theatre Incorporated, this production kept Miss Harris employed for only twenty-nine performances. George Currie reported to the readers of the *BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE* on April 1, 1948: "Gilliam Webb, Julie Harris and Ann Hegira snarled in their appointed parts, leaving it to others to bring the



Julie Harris in *I Am a Camera*

action up to date. Certainly they were ugly enough, but we have no 1948 witches."

After an appearance in the American Repertory Theatre production of *Alice in Wonderland*—as the White Rabbit—Miss Harris secured her first really important Broadway part. The Actors Studio was an organization composed largely of young players who gathered informally to perfect their technique and acquire experience. During the summer of 1948, Bessie Breuer's *Sundown Beach* was given a try-out engagement at the Westport (Conn.) Country Playhouse. It was well received

DOUBLE DOOR

A Play in 3 Acts by Elizabeth McFadden

A hit in New York and London. In the films by Paramount. It now challenges the best acting talent of the college and high school theatres.

The scene which stands throughout is a fascinatingly mysterious room in a palatial old house on Fifth Avenue, New York. Here one generation opposes the next in a drama of powerful emotion. The characters are seven men, five women.

"It forces an audience to lose its detachment, to become a part of it, and, out of sheer nervousness, to applaud its hero and hate its villain . . . makes you writhe and twist in suspense." —John Mason Brown, Post.

Price: 85 cents

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SAMUEL FRENCH

25 West 45th Street
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Hollywood 46, Calif.

there and on September 7, 1948, the play bowed in New York. Most of the cast were little known to the average Broadway playgoer, but it included Gloria Leachman, Phyllis Thaxter, Jennifer Howard, Steve Hill, Lou Gilbert, Joan Copeland and Julie Harris. All of these players have made notable hits since then. Miss Harris won particular commendation for her enactment of the young wife.

Once again Miss Harris had hit town in a quick failure. The Belasco Theatre was shuttered the following Saturday evening following the eighth performance of *Sundown Beach*. Life must have been rather discouraging for our young actress during this period, though she was gaining very valuable experience. With each successive role—in *The Young and Fair* and *Montserrat*—more people became aware of her. When Harold Clurman was faced with the difficult task of finding someone to play Frankie Addams in *The Member of the Wedding*, he remembered Julie Harris and called her in for the role.

On the evening of January 10, 1952, after the performance of *I Am a Camera* (Miss Harris' current play), a party was given at the Empire Theatre to herald Julie Harris's elevation to stardom. John van Druten, the adapter of Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories*, delivered a speech on this occasion. Gathered about him were many of the great of the theatre. It is fitting that such ceremony be observed when a new star has taken a place in the theatre.

In June, 1950, the Clarence Derwent award for the best non-featured performance by an actor during the 1949-50 season was awarded to Douglas Watson. During that season Mr. Watson had appeared as Rodrigo in *That Lady* and as Peter Whitfield in *The Wisteria Trees*. He had thus played roles with two of the theatre's first ladies—Katharine Cornell in the former and Helen Hayes in the Joshua Logan transplanting of Chekhov's *The Cherry*

(Continued on page 29)

DRAMATICS

OHIO REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Youngstown, March 28 and 29



Lucille Lee

THESPIAN Troupe 479, Rayen High School, Youngstown, Ohio, under the direction of Lucille Lee, Troupe Sponsor, is sponsoring the second Ohio Regional Conference on March 28 and 29 as a part of its celebration of its Tenth Anniversary. Thespian Troupes of Ohio and Western Pennsylvania are being invited to participate in this celebration.

Dr. W. J. Friederich of Marietta College and Dr. G. Harry Wright of Kent State University will be the principal speakers. Dr. J. Fred Essig, Ass't. Superintendent of the Youngstown Schools, Frank W. Tear, Principal of Rayen and Honorary Member of Troupe 479, and Leon C. Miller, Secretary of National Thespians, will also appear on the program. Specialists in their field will speak at the workshops.

The tentative program follows:

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

1:30-6:30 P.M. Registration, Rayen School
6:30 P.M. Banquet, Cafeteria
Speakers: Mr. Tear, Mr. Miller and Dr. Friederich;
Roll Call of Troupes
8:15 P.M. Performance of "Father of the Bride,"
Rayen Troupe 479, Lucille Lee, Director

SATURDAY, MARCH 29

9:30 A.M. Assembly, Auditorium
Dr. Essig and Dr. Friederich, Speakers
Lighting: Robert H. Merrill of Indianapolis.
10:30 A.M. Workshops, Assigned Rooms
Staging: Troupe 363, Wellsville, Arletto Coberly,
John Yellano, Sponsors; Dr. Friederich and Mr.
Merrill, Speakers
Acting: Troupe 66, Canton Lehman, Florence Hill,
Sponsor.
One-Act Play: Donald Elser, Youngstown College.
Television: Joseph Flynn, Director of the Canfield,
Ohio, Players.
Make-up: Movie on Make-up, Banner Play Company.
12:00 Noon Luncheon and Dancing, Cafeteria
Conference for sponsors with Dr. Friederich
1:30 P.M. One Act Plays, Auditorium
"The Black Valise," Boardman Troupe 785, Youngs-
town, Evan Williams, Sponsor.
"The Valiant," Ursuline Troupe 1126, Youngstown,
Sister Rosemary, Sponsor.
"Not Tonight," Struthers Troupe 89, Struthers, Carole
Anderson, Sponsor.
Critic-Judge, Dr. Wright

CONFERENCE EXPENSES

Registration	\$1.00
Meals (Banquet and Luncheon)	\$2.25
Overnight Housing	No Charge

THESPIAN EASTERN CONFERENCE

Reading, Pa., April 4 and 5



Mildred B. Hahn

FOR over a year Thespian Troupe 416, Reading, Pa., Senior High School, with its sponsor and also state regional director, Mildred B. Hahn, has been planning the Second Eastern Thespian Regional Dramatic Arts Conference, scheduled for April 4 and 5 at Reading. This conference is a part of an all year's celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the founding of public schools in that city.

Clarence Derwent, President of Actors' Equity, a board member of ANTA, and a very distinguished actor, will deliver the keynote address of the conference. Dr. Barrett Davis, head of the Drama Dept. of Lehigh University, will be the critic judge of the one-act plays. Jean Donahey, Senior Councilor, and Leon C. Miller, Executive Secretary of the National Thespian Society, will participate in the two-day celebration.

The tentative program follows:

FRIDAY, APRIL 4

1:00-4:30 P.M. Registration, Reading Sr. High School
5:30-7:30 P.M. Conference Banquet, Cafeteria
8:00 P.M. 3 Thespian One-act Plays, Main Auditorium
Critic Judge: Dr. Davis

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

9:30-10:00 A.M. Assembly, Main Auditorium
Greetings: Mr. Miller and Miss Donahey; Dr. Thomas
H. Ford, Superintendent of Schools, Reading, Pa.;
Mr. Earl A. Master, Principal, Reading Senior High
School; and Mayor James A. Bamford of Reading, Pa.
10:00-11:00 A.M. Workshops, Assigned Rooms
Arena Theatre, Radio and Television, Staging and
Lighting, Costuming, Make-up, conducted by Thes-
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DIRECTING: PRE-REHEARSAL PLANNING

By JOHN W. HALLAUER

THE director in the modern theatre has a great responsibility. It is he who must bring all the diverse elements of the theatre together in some over-all pattern of unity that will best express the play which is being performed. His job can be divided into three large general categories: (1) he plans and prepares a script which will act as a guide to all the technicians of the theatre and to himself in his work with the actors; (2) during a rehearsal period, he brings all the technical elements together and he directs the actors, using them as his most important tool in creating something new — a play in performance on a stage; (3) by various methods he gets his actors to act.

When working with amateurs, the director will usually find that the third of the above categories is the most difficult. However, since the preceding three articles were concerned with acting, those on directing will be devoted to a few of the director's more common problems which are not primarily related to getting actors to act. Instead they are related to preparing the script, expressing the play, and overcoming the weaknesses of his actors. The particular problems discussed are based upon questions asked most frequently by several high school teachers who, untrained in theatre, were suddenly faced with the task of directing class plays and plays for contests.

Working with the Script

Although it is the most important of the director's pre-rehearsal jobs, it is impossible, because of space limitations,



The Hasty Heart, Dearborn, Mich., High School (Troupe 586), James Gallagher, Director.

to go into detail about preparing a prompt script. However, there are a few basic ideas that every director should keep in mind when getting ready to direct a play.

A director should spend a quarter to a third of the total time he can devote to a play in study and preparation of the script before rehearsals begin. This may seem an extreme amount of time, but it is essential if the director is to do the best work of which he is capable. It is only thus that he will be ready to give his students the greatest value from their theatre experience, which is certainly his duty as an educator. In addition, he will save himself time and energy in the long run. This can be reduced to what is almost a law of the theatre: for every hour spent in preliminary preparation the director will save at least two hours of time, trouble, and worry in rehearsal. Saving time is important. Even at the best, available rehearsal hours in most amateur theatres are seldom more than barely adequate to get a play ready for performance.

Before his first rehearsal a director should have studied his play until he knows its meaning, its characters, its structure, and its general atmosphere or mood. Such knowledge cannot be superficial. For example, the director must be able to explain to his cast, so that they really understand it, not only

the plot but also the theme or basic meaning of the play. He must be intimately acquainted with the characters, and he must be ready to supply to his actors, if necessary, complete motivations for everything the characters do and say. He must know the function of each scene in the dramatic progression of the play. Finally, he must know what over-all effect he wants to achieve when the play is finally put together in performance on the stage.

When he is working with amateurs the director should come to the first rehearsal with all stage movements planned and written in detail in his script. Right from the beginning he can set an atmosphere of business-like swiftness and sureness, which is very important with an untrained cast. Always knowing just what he wants, he can walk the actors through quickly, having them write down their movements. In two or three rehearsals he can have all basic action blocked.

Of course the director must not feel that his planned action is sacred. As time goes on, he will want to change parts of it that do not work as originally visualized. His actors will have to create motivations for the action — motivations in which they can believe and which are based on their characters and the situation. When they find this impossible, even with the director's help, the action will have to be changed until they can find the right motivations.

Some experienced directors prefer to let their actors gradually build their own pattern of action, based upon their characters, motivations, and environment. This is perhaps the ideal way to help actors genuinely create, but it takes much experience and ingenuity on the part of the director, and a highly imaginative and at least partially-trained cast. Above all, it takes far more time than any of us usually have when we start directing a play.

Planning the Set

When he makes a floor plan during his preliminary work on the script, the



The Willow and I, William Chrisman High School (Troupe 389), Independence, Mo., Mary Foster Williams, Director.



The Good Neighbors, Wendell Phillips High School (Troupe 1039), Chicago, Ill., Bessie Coatworth, Sponsor.

most important thing for the director to consider is having the largest number of acting areas possible and still retaining everything in the set essential to the play. Furniture should be placed in groups, each group making a possible center of action. Many directors have found themselves frustrated in their attempts to gain variety of movement and grouping by having to work in a set where the furniture was strung regularly around three walls, leaving what amounts to just one acting area — the center.

Of course, he must work within the facilities available, but the director should use his ingenuity to vary the usual box-like setting with its inevitable up center entrance. For example, he could make such simple changes as raking the backwall, or putting a jog in a sidewall and placing an entrance there. Other things being equal, an irregular set with more than one level (a stairway, a platform, etc.) will be more interesting and will provide better acting areas than a symmetrical set with only one level.

Planning for Theatre Discipline

In order to do good theatre work and hence to gain the most value from the work, it is essential that good theatre discipline be established for everyone from the beginning. By having no plan for discipline in the theatre, many directors pile up trouble for themselves and waste fully half their own time and that of their actors.

At the time of casting, a full rehearsal schedule should already be made out. Before anyone is cast he should understand that he is expected to be available at all times listed. If he cannot give that amount of time, he cannot be cast. Even if it means using the second-best in some roles, it is far better to get this settled right at the beginning than it is to have the rehearsal schedule disrupted, cast morale lowered, and perhaps to be forced to more severe disciplinary action later. It is often possible

to use people who have regular commitments one or two nights a week, providing the rehearsal schedule can be worked around them and that they can get out of their commitments for at least the last full week of rehearsal.

Many directors divide the play into scenes according to the entrances and exits of characters, numbering these scenes consecutively. These scene divisions and their numbers are given to the cast at the first rehearsal. The rehearsal schedule is then set up according to the scenes. During the early weeks of rehearsal, if the play does not demand consecutive work, scenes which involve the same two or three people can be called for any one rehearsal period. The other members of the cast do not need to come at all at this time. If it is necessary to work consecutively, then the scenes can be called for different times as new people are involved. For example, the same three people are in scenes 1, 2, 3. These are scheduled for seven o'clock. A new person enters in scene 4. This is scheduled for eight o'clock. Two new people enter in scene

5. This is scheduled for eight-fifteen. Scenes 6, 7, 8 are scheduled for eight-thirty. Since two of the people in the first group of scenes are not needed in scenes 6, 7, 8, they may leave or find a place to study until scene 9, which is scheduled for nine-thirty. And so on to the end of the rehearsal period.

By the above method it is possible to have people present only when they are actually at work on the stage. Students appreciate the sense of not wasting any time just sitting and waiting. Best of all, the method does away with the necessity of the director's diverting any of his attention from the stage to the endless distractions which can easily be provided by a group of high school students who are at the moment not at work or directly under his control.

Constant lateness or an unexcused absence from rehearsal should not be tolerated for a moment. Unless there is a perfect alibi, of which there are very few, the guilty cast member should be warned upon the first offense and removed immediately upon the second. Even if this person should be one of the better actors, the loss will be more than compensated by the heightened morale of the rest of the cast and the better work that is possible when theatre discipline is maintained. The removal of a cast member is usually an actio that has to be taken just once, if it is accomplished with fairness and dispatch. The effect is likely to carry over into the director's future productions so that the problem will not arise again.

With amateurs good theatre discipline depends basically upon the attitude of the director. If the director has prepared carefully so that he is always sure of what he wants and is exact in his demands, if he feels that the work has value and importance and is worth doing well, a group of amateur actors will tend to fall automatically into a good working atmosphere.



The Admirable Crichton, John Marshall High School (Troupe 976), Los Angeles, Calif., Jayne Crawley, Helen Topper, Sponsors.

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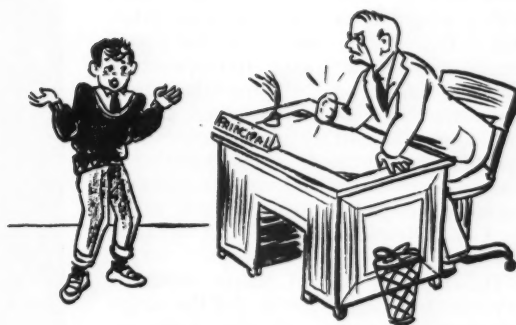
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TICS MARCH, 1952

THEATRE on BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

THIS has been a great season for revivals and adaptations. Only seven of the current plays are both original works and plays not seen hereabouts before. Even most of the musical works follow the prevailing pattern. Among the recent offerings have been revivals of two favorite musical comedies.

The first of these is *Pal Joey*, which re-opened almost eleven years to the day after its original Broadway showing. It was on December 25, 1940, that the new work with book by John O'Hara, score by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Lorenz Hart bowed at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre. Gene Kelly was seen in the title role and the supporting cast included Vivienne Segal, June Havoc, Jack Durant, Jean Castro and a young dancer named Van Johnson. For many devotees *Pal Joey* stands as a peak among the operas of Rodgers and Hart. When the show was new a war was waging among musicians, recording companies and broadcasting studios. Consequently, it was several years before the general public came to enjoy *Bewitched*, *Bothered and Bewildered*, *I Could Write a Book* and *Zip*.

The current revival seems destined to enjoy as much favor as did the original—perhaps more. Harold Lang is now playing the despicable heel and Vivienne Segal is seen in the role she originated. Helen Gallagher and Lionel Stander head the supporting cast and Elaine Stritch does that delicious spoof of a vanishing form of burlesque, *Zip*. We are grateful for this revival of *Pal Joey* and hope that it presages a long line of Rodgers and Hart revivals. *Babes in Arms*, an amalgam of *The Garrick Gaieties*, *The Boys from Syracuse* . . . pick your favorite and lobby for it.

The second musical revival has not fared so well. It may have been too early to bring back a production of *Kiss Me, Kate*. Certainly the production left a great deal to be desired. It seemed like a good idea to bring into the Broadway Theatre the company which had been trouping the Spewacks—Cole Porter version of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* about the country. The company, however, was quite poor, the scenery and costumes very battered. If this is the kind of productions you non-New Yorkers are accustomed to, it amazes me that you maintain any interest in the theatre.

Many of you know, I'm certain, how Shakespeare's *Shrew* became incorporated into a Broadway musical. The plot of *Kiss Me, Kate* relates the misdeeds of a company who are breaking in a new production of Shakespeare's farce. The romance of the leading players—their ups and downs—during a Baltimore try-out provide the framework upon which to hang Cole Porter's sparkling melodies. The score of the musical stood up even under all the defects of the production. My favorite is still *Brush up Your Shakespeare*, but the romantic ballad *So in Love* and the brisk *Too Darn Hot* were very pleasant upon rehearing.

Robert Wright and Holly Harris were seen in the roles created by Alfred Drake and Patricia Morison. Marilyn Day (the most successful member of the troupe) and Frank Derbas were seen as the second couple. It was in the role played by Mr. Derbas that

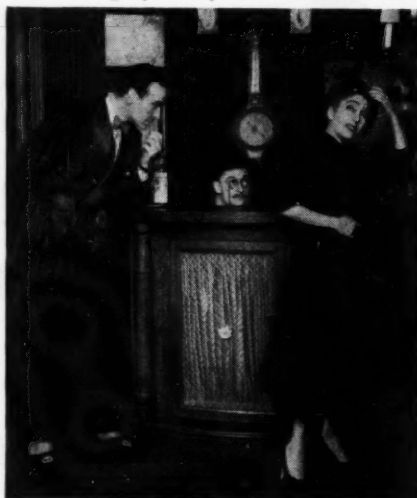


Photo by Vandamm
David Niven, Alan Webb and Gloria Swanson in *Nina*.

Harold Lang (doing the lead in the aforementioned *Pal Joey*) made so lasting an impression. It would be unfair to try to determine how successfully the Hanya Holm choreography stands up because of the ragged execution.

Saint Subber and Lemuel Ayers, the producers, announced a limited run of four weeks for *Kiss Me, Kate*. The critical reception was so poor and the advance sale so weak, however, that the offering was withdrawn last Sunday evening after the eighth performance. It was sad to see a recent favorite fare so poorly, but it would have been equally sad to defame the wonderful memory of the original with the very unacceptable duplication.

Just before the holidays, Sir Laurence and Lady Olivier came into the Ziegfeld Theatre with their dual presentation. They are presenting two Cleopatra plays—George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is a great acting feat for Vivien Leigh and

for Sir Laurence. In the former work she is seen as the kittenish young Egyptian temptress. In the Shakespeare work she is forced to assume the habiliments of the mature Queen. It is a very difficult job to bring about in the course of two successive evenings.

Many of us had seen Vivien Leigh as the Shavian Queen in the excellent film version of the play. There, she was teamed with Claude Rains, who made a magnificent Caesar. Two seasons ago Lili Palmer was seen in the part with Cedric Hardwicke, the master of Shavian playing in our theatre. His production will, no doubt, take a place alongside of the earlier ones. We hope that this fine British company will play long enough for vast numbers of American theatregoers to see the plays.

The New York City Theatre Company is once again installed in the City Center. Maurice Evans is still serving as the artistic director of the company with the valuable assistance of George Shaefer. The first play of the current series was Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* with Mr. Evans, Mildred Dunnock, Kent Smith and Diana Lynn. Ibsen's drama is a most important play, historically speaking, and should be given occasional revivals. It is, nonetheless, a most difficult play to sell to a modern audience. The New York City Theatre Company is to be commended for undertaking it.

The second production has been far more successful. So much so in fact that following its ten-day engagement in the municipally operated playhouse it will move to a Broadway house for a run. Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* is the work, and the title role is being played by Celeste Holm. The supporting principals are Art Smith, Kevin McCarthy and Grace Valentine. This move inevitably reminds one of the days of the first productions of the O'Neill plays. Many of them were first seen in one of the little theatres situated in Greenwich Village or in Provincetown, Massachusetts. From these experimental stages, they would be moved into a larger, more centrally located Broadway showshop. Next week—once again—O'Neill moves onto the Rialto.

The void on the stage of the City Center will be filled by a revival of Clemence Dane's drama with music by Richard Adinsell, *Come of Age*. This is the play about the poet Chatterton, who died in his early years—late in the eighteenth century. Under the direction of Guthrie McClintic, Judith Anderson will be seen in the role she played in the 1934 production. We are looking forward to seeing this lovely play again.

We mentioned O'Neill a few lines ago and therefore introduce a few words about the ANTA Play series. The 1951-52 series will be inaugurated

(Continued on page 28)

DIALING AROUND

By SI MILLS

IN February of 1951 the National Broadcasting Company carried on a campaign aimed at prospective sponsors for *The Big Show* program. They had been on the air for thirteen weeks, having duly impressed listeners. They must have made the right impression, according to a Nielsen rating, since the audience had increased by 81% in just six weeks.

Part of the ads run by N. B. C. on behalf of *The Big Show* was devoted to excerpts from laudatory letters to Tallulah Bankhead, mistress of ceremonies of the show. Part of the ad gave the names of guest artists who grace the stanza: Jimmy Durante, Eddie Cantor, Ed Wynn, Groucho Marx, Bob Hope, Martin and Lewis, Frankie Laine, Ezio Pinza, Judy Holliday, Judy Garland. And the list could go on and on now because as the program gets older more and more guests appear.

The advertising—or the network's other activities—must have worked since the show has continued to appear, and it has gotten at least one new sponsor. According to the ad, asking price for thirty minutes on *The Big Show* was \$19,512.20.

Now to you (and me) that may sound like a lot of money, but remember that the ads were aimed at people who think and act big as far as money is concerned. It was a proof of the gag "Talk is cheap . . . until you're on a nationwide hookup." Obviously the advertising paid off because the Reynolds Aluminum Company is now sponsoring part of the program.

The continued appearance of this show is a boon to listeners as well as to the entertainment industry. For one thing the audience benefits because established stars in comedy, drama and other fields of audio-entertainment are presented in a manner that is not stilted. For instance, George Sanders has been heard frequently as a person filled with boredom; his biting sarcasm and egocentricity are causes for laughter. (Here can be seen one of the tools of comedy: an ordinarily distasteful trait is dwelt on so long that it becomes ridiculous. Instead of provoking disgust and annoyance, it draws laughter to the point that what is at first a frown later becomes a smirk, then a smile, and finally a hearty guffaw. In this type of humor there are several imminent dangers. First, the extension must not be carried to the point of being overdone. Second, the writing must be such that it is not too obvious. And third, the acting must be sufficiently capable so that the audience does not become bothered.)

The Big Show does not suffer from any of the shortcomings as its audience appeal so adequately proves. Its technique of mixing comedy, drama, etc., is hardly new. The variety show idea has flourished for a long time. When the acts are completely independent,

and they are produced on a stage, they constitute "vaudeville." When they are unified by being in one show, under one management, and they still appear on a stage, they are known as a "review." But when they appear on radio, unified or not, they make up a "variety" show. Whatever the name, this sort of show, if properly controlled, can be the source of much pleasure. (Note the qualifying word "if.") The problem could be one or several of the acts being so weak as to require carrying by the others. This isn't so bad if there is only a small number that have to be supported. But what happens when there are too many? Simple! The show folds. And what are "too many?" That would depend on the strength of the rest. The ideal set-up, of course, is to have as many self-supporting acts as possible.

And *The Big Show* is just that sort of show. It may have weak acts—just how many and just which ones would de-



Kukla, Burr, Fran and Ollie take time out to look over the Zoomar lens used on their show.

pend on our individual tastes—but the overall picture is a pleasant one. The mistress of ceremonies is engaging and capable, as are the variety of stars and acts. In fact this is probably as close as radio has come to superb vaudeville, an entertainment form that has almost been lost.

On Your TV Screen

When towards the end of 1951, it was announced that *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*, an "across the board" (five times weekly) presentation, was being cut from a thirty-minute to a fifteen-minute spot, there was a mild sound of disapproval from the audience. That's the trouble. The disapproval was "mild," too mild, not in the vehemence of the complaints, but in the total number of them. Even those persons who didn't care too much for this show (and who knows why) should have seen the pattern. This was being cut. The Garroway show was given a quick shuffle: Mr. G. being shifted to an early morning time. And the Gabby Hayes Sunday show was dropped completely. This is not an obituary column, and therefore intends dwelling only on the *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* presentation.

With a certain amount of Christian

charity, let's first admit that because "K., F. and O." is a show mainly made up of puppets, most adults were of the opinion that the stanza was (and is) aimed at children. Wrong. Although the hour of presentation and many of the devices are used to captivate the youngsters, there is plenty of thought material for the oldsters. One is reminded of the medieval morality play. And what about the comics in the newspapers? Don't they use contrived plots, colorful figures, simple lines, and a myriad other ways of appealing to all age groups? You hardly find adults eschewing them. Why then avoid a good TV show just because it may superficially look like it is being beamed at children. "Don't judge a book by its cover!"

But let's get down to the show itself. The viewer is constantly amazed at the facility with which Burr Tillstrom manipulates the characters in puppet form that he has created. His continued lack of appearance during the show—he has to be below stage to operate the figures that you and I meet—is one way of bespeaking a willingness to let the puppets speak for themselves. Actually of course they aren't speaking; it's Mr. Tillstrom from "backstage." But the point is that after having become acquainted with the "dramatis personae" you believe that they are doing the talking. They are real and vital. They cease being bits of mockery in somebody's hands, and develop personalities of their own. They are no more sham than live actors on a stage, persons to whom you are willing to listen and believe. Fortunately (or is it "wisely?") you are not asked to see the characteristics of all humans in just two "persons," Kukla and Ollie. There are about seven others: Fletcher Rabbit, Colonel Cracky, Madame Oglepuss, Beulah Witch and Cecil Bill, to name those who appear most frequently.

In these "actors" you are asked to see the foibles of all people. Kukla is the good-natured soul who tries to please all, to hurt none. Ollie is the brash, swaggering young man who puts on a highly polished, cosmopolitan air, but who is simple and lovable nonetheless. Then there are the nimble frolicksome Fletcher, the pompous Colonel and all the others. Each is the symbol of a human type. Each, like so many dramatic characters, is painted with a particular picture in mind. And most of

(Continued on page 27)



Lincoln leaves for Springfield, a scene from *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, as produced by Thespian Troupe 745, Helena, Mont., High School, Doris Marshall, Director.

ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS, a biographical sketch in twelve scenes by Robert E. Sherwood. 25 men, 7 women, and townspeople. American period costumes, 1830 to 1861. Royalty quoted upon request. Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 14 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

Suitability

ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS is an undertaking of considerable size for one person on whom rests the responsibility for all phases of this dramatic production. Many hours of careful planning and patient preparation are required, but reward is to be found in the knowledge of "a job well done" which transcends all else. Playing time is two hours and forty minutes with a ten minute intermission. With regard to general appeal we would like to quote the speaker of the House of the Montana legislature, Ory J. Armstrong. "Real Americans never tire of reading about Lincoln and certainly the portrait of any part of his life is always an inspiration."

Plot

The play shows in a series of quick-moving scenes the critical years of Lincoln's early manhood up to the moment of his election as President. We see the backwoods man, a failure at shopkeeping, but a great favorite with friends and neighbors, slowly groping forward through the troubled years in Springfield, at last beginning to realize the great future before him. The play ends with that magnificent speech of his from the train that takes him to Washington.

Casting

A must is the student to portray Lincoln. Here is a role that requires much, for Lincoln was a man of many sides. Naturally he must have somewhat the same physical proportions, but even more important he must be able to express Lincoln as we have come to picture him. The actor who plays Stephen Douglas needs a fine oratorical

Staging

ABE LINCOLN in ILLINOIS

By **DIANE DRAPER** and **MARY LOU LE FORS**

voice above all. He is a portly person and maintains constant dignity. Then there is the difficult Mary Todd, constantly goading Lincoln onward in her effort to approach greatness, but who breaks herself as a result of her own selfish ambitions. Bowling Green, through the years, remains beside Lincoln, never losing faith in the man who one day becomes the emancipator of a wronged people. Ninian Edwards, effeminate and aristocratic, was a friend from the early days. The dignified and quiet Joshua Speed, and the firebrand Billy Herndon, who delivers many of his oratorical masterpieces while intoxicated, must both be cast as the above actors, with students who can progressively age during the production. The cast is large but not unwieldy. We used approximately 300 students including the political band, the chorus group, the high school band and the townspeople.

Directing

The mood centers about the character of Lincoln, a character that may be compared with a mighty river. At times it is drifting with quiet sadness, then sparkling with gentle humor. Again it is placid with the smooth surface of human kindness, then swelling, mounting in strength, catapulting and plummeting, as if stirred to great emotion by some unknown force. Here it settles to a depth where the roar of the ages mingles in a vastness too deep to fathom, but always beneath the surface lies the undertow of true greatness.

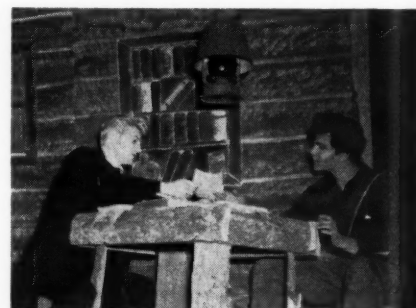
Due to the length of the play, the action must move along rapidly. Here we find a serious problem, because Lincoln's speech must be slow and deliberate as we imagine it to be, and yet it must not drag in order to maintain interest. The student actor who did the role of Lincoln had his playbook for several months in advance in order to perfect his lines. Recordings of Raymond Massey's portrayal and tape recordings from the University of Denver production were used for study.

Interest is keen during the Rutledge Tavern scene where the Clary's Grove Boys burst into action. They are big and rough in the manner of frontiersmen, but underneath are fine, good-humored people.

It is evening on the lonely prairie; a boy lies ill, miles from a doctor or preacher. The silhouetted figure of a freed woman can faintly be seen as her voice flows in singing *Deep River*. Here we realize the courage of the early

pioneers as they move westward, searching for a better life. The play calls for a man in this part, but we had a Negro girl with a beautiful singing voice in our class, so we placed her in the role.

The Lincoln-Douglas debate is contrasted on one side by the suave aggressiveness of Douglas, who fires strong emotions, with Lincoln's quiet speech of earnest expression that leads people to think for themselves, rather than to follow blindly the driving words of intolerance and injustice. In the political hall men wait nervously and tensely for news of the election. All the excitement is heightened by the political band that rallies the townspeople to shouts and cheers. During this situation, Mary completely loses her self-control and becomes hysterical. It is now that Lincoln, who has tolerated her temper and outbursts quietly for



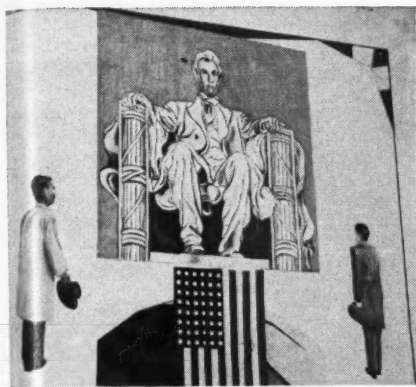
Mentor Graham instructs Abe.

years, curses her for her infernal ambitions. At last the election is conceded to Lincoln, but these are serious times and there is little joy in the heart of Lincoln.

His farewell is one of great sadness, for he is leaving his many true friends with the knowledge that the fate of a nation rests on him. There is a dismal rain falling as the townspeople gather about the train. The occasion is a very solemn one for all concerned as the prophetic note of death prevails. As the train pulls out the townspeople join in singing *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals were held for five weeks, the last three being devoted to concentrated practice. Class time was set for most of the preliminary study. Morning, noon and night rehearsals were called the last few weeks. Music rehearsals were held the last week.



One of the beautiful murals especially designed for this play at Helena High School.

Staging

The entire auditorium was decorated like an old-time political hall, so that the audience itself felt drawn into the drama. On either side of the stage was a platform built out over the pit and the pit also was filled in almost to stage level. The first scene was built on the platform at stage right. The backing represented the walls of a log cabin and all the furniture was primitive. The second, third and fourth scene sets were set up one behind the other in that order, and the stage crew practiced so that the changes of furniture were made lightning fast. The Edwards' home set, used in the fifth, eighth and tenth scenes was on a wagon. Nearly all the scenes were painted in shades of brown, keeping the earthy tones, representing the fact that Lincoln was close to nature. The scene on the prairie was very simple, but effective. At the back was a gauze drop and a prairie ground row. The back of a prairie schooner was seen at stage left. A kettle over a fire was set at right center.

The Lincoln-Douglas debate was held on a balcony in the middle of the audience. Because the boy who played Stephen Douglas was taller than Douglas is said to be in the history books, his side of the platform was lowered, thus making him appear shorter and Lincoln even taller. Scene eleven, the political scene, was on the platform at stage left, with the crowd around the foot of the platform and on the raised pit. The crowd and small political band came in from the back of the auditorium in both the eleventh and twelfth scenes.

Lighting

For the first scene, a single lantern lighted the table, leaving Lincoln's face in shadow. In the seventh scene only blue and green lights were used for the effect of night on the prairie. A single red beam spot lighted the fire. A 30-foot screen was used backstage with a projection lantern. This had a pastoral slide in the same blue and green. The debate was lighted with a red and an orange flood and all the auditorium

lights were left on. In most scenes beam spots, banks and baby spots were all utilized. In the smaller scenes sometimes only one or two beam spots were used to bring out certain parts of the stage. The final scene in the railroad station was made very impressive by a whole bank of red foots and blue back lighting. The projection lantern had a slide with an American flag and gray clouds. We also had a rain-effect machine in this scene. The sound effect of the train was a record on the public-address system.

Costumes

Fortunately, we live in a town with a great deal of historical background and a wealth of relics. Many kind people loaned costumes and contributed information concerning details. Most of the boys' period costumes were rented from the Western Costume Company of Hollywood. The girls and their mothers, working from sketches and makeshift patterns, turned out some perfectly beautiful dresses of the 1830's to 1860's. Drapery materials bought on sale made lovely authentic looking costumes. The usherettes were also dressed appropriately in old-fashioned costumes. All photographs were taken by school photographer, Milton Burgess.

Make-up

The most serious make-up problem was ageing the characters because the play covers a long period of years. Most of the boys grew their own sideburns and left their hair uncut. Dr. Barrick's bulldog sideburns were made of crepe hair, as was Lincoln's beard. The beard was made beforehand and put on with Fix-it when Lincoln changed just before the farewell scene.

Budget

Royalty, \$65.00; lumber and paint, \$85.00; costumes, \$210.00; freight for costumes, \$50.00; programs and posters, \$110.00; make-up, \$15.00; rain machine, \$35.00; gelatine paper, \$7.50; playbooks, \$32.50; dress material, \$87.50; auditorium decorations, \$46.50; total, \$744.

Publicity

Not many schools are so favored as



Set drawing for scenes 5, 8 and 10 by Thespian Lawrence Stalnaker.

we are in having the excellent cooperation of the city newspaper. Our production was publicized by a full-page coverage in the Sunday edition. Write-ups in the school newspaper and some radio advertisements were also employed. Large posters in gold and green were distributed about town. We also had the excellent cooperation of the entire student body in spreading the news to friends and relatives.

Program

Programs were of white paper with brown ink, again keeping the warm earthy tones. Covers of thin copper sheeting were donated. On these was printed a portrait of Lincoln together with the title, dedication and date. Particularly well liked were the lines on the back cover by Judge Walter Malone. "A blend of mirth and sadness, smiles and tears; a quaint 'knight errant' of the pioneers; a homely hero born of star and sod; a peasant prince; a masterpiece of God."

Results

Young Lincoln's struggle to acquire an education is a fine example to school students and his attitude toward his fellowmen is a lesson for people the world over. The play was presented on Lincoln's birthday, honoring Montana's Thirty-second Legislative Assembly, thereby bettering relations between the educational system and the governing body. Audience response is evident in the many congratulatory letters received by the school.

Next Month: Friend Hannah

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PLEASANTVILLE, NEW YORK



Sol Halprin, head of the Camera Department and Film Laboratory at the 20th Century-Fox Studios.

SOL HALPRIN, head of the Camera Department and Film Laboratory at 20th Century-Fox, joined the staff of the old Fox Studios in 1918 as an assistant cameraman. He was one of the early experts with the old Akeley gyroscopic camera that was used for shooting chase scenes in the Westerns.

Equipped with a telescopic lens and a finder that fitted snugly to the eye, the Akeley, when handled by a competent cameraman, could follow the action of the swiftest horses. Halprin recalls vividly the days when he operated the camera from the body of a speeding open automobile. He remembers too the black eye he usually carried as a battle scar; although the eye-piece of the camera had a protective rubber cushion, the constant vibration from the chase over rough ground invariably left its mark.

Old-school cameramen were usually products of the film laboratories. Today's cameraman, however, is likely to know nothing of the complexities of processing and printing the very film he exposes. The laboratory at 20th is a self-contained unit, as is the Camera Department; both are under the supervision of Sol Halprin, dean of Hollywood's cinematographers. But the lab is no longer a stepping-stone to the enviable spot of Director of Photography, today's title for the man in charge of cinematography on a picture.

In addition to the laboratory and camera work, Halprin supervises background projection and optical effects. Background projection was developed around 1931, when a method was discovered for projecting moving backgrounds on a "process screen" against which the action of players could be photographed. The method was made possible by devising a way to synchronize the projection of successive motion picture images on the process screen, with the exposure of successive frames of the film in the camera. Prior

SCREEN

SHOOTING the WORKS

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

to this development, the alternatives were either a static background painted on glass and reproduced on the film in the laboratory, or an expensive trip to the actual location that was to serve as a background—a frequently impossible production task.

Optical effects are familiar to every moviegoer. They range from the simple fade-outs (and fade-ins) and the lap dissolves, in which one scene melts into another, to the most elaborate "wipes." In the simplest wipe, the new image seems to slice across the screen, literally wiping the old one off. The most complex forms are seen in the trailers (or "prevues") of coming attractions, when the wipes take on endless geometric forms. Major studios, however, seldom bother to make their own trailers; most of them are turned out by National Screen Service, a company specializing in this field. The technicians at 20th can match this spectacular handiwork, but fortunately most of the finest films use nothing more complicated than fades and dissolves.

We were interested to learn that of Sol Halprin's two hobbies—golf and "amateur" photography—golf receives the less attention. ("I carry my clubs in the car. But that's just about as far as they get.") And so far as home pictures go, he prefers color slides to home movies.

This is hardly surprising. The Camera Department gets its fill of motion pictures. Some of Halprin's directors of photography—there are eleven on his staff—are just picking up their vacations that were due over a year ago. There is rarely an interval between the last work on one film and the planning of the next. Although these top cameramen occasionally express preference for one assignment over another, the pictures are parceled out so that no one person gets all the plums.

A director of photography starts work on a film from a week to a month in advance of shooting, plotting carefully with the director the entire plan for getting what the director wants recorded on film. He doesn't handle the camera itself; this is left to the operator



James Mason and Danielle Darrieux in the forthcoming 20th Century-Fox spy movie, *5 Fingers*, adapted from the book, *Operation Cicero*.

and his one or two assistants. The director of photography is in every sense a creative artist, and his artistry is rewarded along with the work of others in the distribution of the annual Oscars. Among the famous names is that of Joseph LaShelle, who received Academy recognition for his photography on *Laura*. Leon Shamroy, whose work is first-rate, is likely to be nominated for a 1951 award for his achievements in *David and Bathsheba*.

Improvements in the equipment used to control camera movement have changed radically the results seen on the screen. The shooting of longer continuous movement has been made possible by silent booms and dollies that are sensitive to highly refined controls. It used to be that two or three relatively static cameras covered every scene: one for long shots, another for medium shots and still another for close-ups and different angles. Pieced together by the editor, a kind of movement was established in the finished product.

Today, one camera is the rule. The action of a scene can be followed from long shot to extreme close-up without interruption. New angles and additional close-ups are recorded by the same camera in later "takes" of parts of the same scene. Thus variety in the screen image is achieved without constant cutting from one shot to another; the director and film editor are given much more freedom in their choice of material without breaking up the continuity and flow of action.

This concept of the camera as a moving eye makes possible visual interest and enhanced dramatic values in scenes such as occur in *Outcasts of Poker Flat*, a screen version of the famous Bret Harte tale. Marooned in a cabin, the outcasts play out their story in extreme limitations of space; the moving camera keeps the screen image alive. One recalls the Olivier *Hamlet* as an instance in which, on occasion, the camera almost stole the show.

At the end of each day's work (the work-week is six days on the lot, seven on location) the director of photography sees the "rushes" or "dailies." These are prints of the shooting done the day before. Black-and-white film is processed right in the studio's laboratory. The one print that is made for the daily viewing is the one used as a work-print by the film editor. The original is rarely touched again until the first "answer print" of the entire film is run off for approval.

Technicolor presents a slightly different picture. All the lab work, for example, is done in the Technicolor plant. This holds true regardless of who uses the film. A second assistant to the camera operator is always assigned from the Technicolor staff. Furthermore the cameras themselves are leased from the Technicolor corporation. Thus far, no color process has been marketed to compete in quality and price with this long-established product.

The color camera makes three records of each scene, each record being a separate film. These three negatives carry the green, blue and red components of the full-color image; combined in printing, they produce a full-color positive film which is used in theatre projection.

Technicolor also markets a single-film color process, used principally in distant

location shooting, as in foreign countries. This Monopack requires the same careful handling as the other, but can be used in the ordinary camera. The processing is more complex, however, for back in the laboratory three negatives—in the green, blue and red components—must be derived from the original. Because of the cost involved in this added step, the film editor works only with a black-and-white work-print; finished color is requested only after the entire picture has been cut. In order to guide the editor in his matching of shots, three feet of each scene, a "pilot" print, is furnished in full color.

The shipping of color film is as precarious as the shipping of animals whose diets must be carefully supervised. It must be refrigerated at a constant temperature (ice is employed) and when it is shipped over long distances, whether by plane or train, a careful log must be kept for re-icing at each 48-hour interval. Keeping track of the film shipments—exposed and unexposed—is a big task in itself; the exposed film in particular represents a large investment, whether color or black-and-white. 20th Century-Fox had companies on location in Australia, South America, Africa and Guatemala at the same time.

There is a long stretch of time between final approval of a picture, after

editing and sound recording, and its appearance in the local theatre. Sol Halprin's working chart indicated that the first answer print of *Belles on Their Toes* was to have been viewed on January 21. An unexpected delay had postponed the session one week. The film, given its final approval at the end of that month, will not appear on the nation's screens until May. Meanwhile, the laboratory in New York that handles printing for national distribution, will be turning out the reels of film to be expressed to theatres all over the country.

Most directors are aware of the unique contributions made to a finished picture by the film editor and the director of photography. These two men deal directly with the heart of the medium, the film itself, and can immeasurably enhance the work of a good director. Similarly, most editors realize that a top-notch cameraman teamed with a first-rate director can make his own work in the cutting room a positive pleasure. Of the three, it is perhaps the director of photography who most nearly represents the point of view that distinguishes motion pictures from the legitimate stage. For his is the point of view of the camera; and ultimately it is this view that the members of an audience must adopt when they watch the completed picture on the screen.

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Our Miss Brooks, Victor Valley High School (Troupe 1092), Victorville, Calif., Katherine Matthews, Sponsor.

Fairmount, Indiana (Thespians Troupe 682)

Our troupe this year has given a number of plays. The most outstanding was *Harvey*, which was a big success. We also gave *Our Miss Brooks*. Some of the one-act plays we did were *If Men Played Cards as Women Do*, *Pop Reads the Christmas Carol* and *Polly Put the Kettle on*. We entered *Gray Bread and Silver Heels* (a radio play) in a contest at Ball State Teachers College.—*Patricia McDermitt, Reporter*

East Saint Louis, Illinois (Thespians Troupe 118)

Our Dramatic Club was very thrilled this year to produce a full-length play written by our Thespian director, Sister Mary Pius. A *Flame Leaps High* portrayed the life of the Mother-foundress of the Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood. Our Christmas production, *At the Feet of the Madonna*, written in choric verse, was supported by a singing chorus of 60 voices. Then came our big production of the season, our annual school operetta entitled *The Marriage of Nannette*. The production was enthusiastically received by the audience in each of its 6 performances.—*Barbara Miller, Reporter*

Columbus, Ohio (Thespians Troupe 647)

With an urge to do something different our group of Thespians launched a new plan. We wrote our own three-act musical comedy, *For Charity's Sake*. The comedy had songs of long ago as well as the latest be-bop tunes. Those Thespians who weren't practicing for the play were either designing, arranging, or doing one of the other thousand and one odd jobs which are so much a part of putting on a play.

We achieved a satisfaction from knowing that we were our own producers, directors, and stars.—*Jo Ann Gassman, President*

Grand Rapids, Michigan (Thespians Troupe 1105)

Big news for Troupe 1105 was the superb production of *Our Town* given in celebration of its installation. Thirty-three students became eligible charter members. Initiation for these and 30 more pledges now working on points in the Dramatics Club was May 18 with Bay City Hardy in charge. Arena style production of *Night Must Fall* was given the same day free for all dramatic groups in the city. One-act plays included *Cracked Ice*, *Thursdays at Home*

THESPIAN CHATTER

By Our Student Thespians

and the *More Perfect Union*. The senior play, *One Foot in Heaven*, was given on April 19-20. Children's theater production of *Secrets of Pat Pending* was presented for elementary schools of the city.—*Joan Petrowich, Reporter*

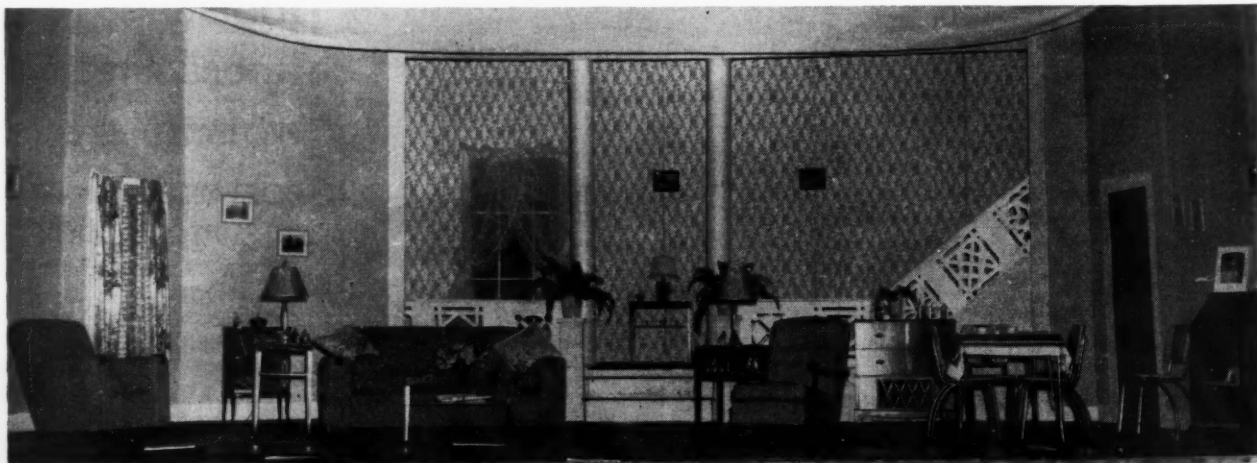
Sylacauga, Alabama (Thespians Troupe 842)

Troupe 842 of Sylacauga High School has been studying Broadway productions this year. To carry out their study they had make-up demonstrations, informal discussions, and reports of the latest hits. Also in the all-school production of *H. M. S. Pinafore* they were in charge of the make-up, staging, and props. They have written and presented an original assembly program, a satire on radio soap opera. Recently they made a trip to Alabama College and saw the well-known production of *College Night*.—*Mary Helen Tate, Reporter*

Grand Junction, Colorado (Thespians Troupe 841)

Grand Junction High School Thespian Troupe 841 has had an active and profitable year. Throughout the year the junior troupes and Thespians have produced one-act plays from which they've netted a good profit and given the student body much entertainment. Their one-act play at the Western Slope Drama Festival was rated superior.

The major production to celebrate National Theater Month was *The Mystery of the Whispering Bell* for which new flats had been built. During the month of January, Thespians would rehearse after school until 5:30, go to the home making rooms and prepare their dinner, and then work on flats until 9:00. It was a weary and worn group who



Set for *Dear Ruth*, presented by Troupe 141, Sault Sainte Marie, Mich., High School, Margaret Tomlinson, Director.

looked with pride at their fine set for their annual production. Junior Troupe members of Drama-Club vie for opportunities to work so that they may earn Thespian membership. — *Thespian Reporter*

St. Peter, Minnesota (Thespian Troupe 928)

Starting the school year off in grand style, the Junior Class gave a very successful presentation of *Little Women*. The one-act plays presented for contest work this spring were *Trifles*, *The Bad Penny*, *Where the Whirlwind Blows*, and *Dust of the Road*. *Dust of the Road* won the local and District Play Festivals and also was staged in the Regional Festival. In the early part of May the Senior Class presented *The Torchbearers*. Initiation ceremonies were held in May for 38 new members with many of the present Thespians receiving stars. — *Thomas A. Annestad, Secretary*

Cincinnati, Ohio (Thespian Troupe 371)

Seton Thespian Troupe 371 in their 1950-51 productions learned that the secret of the stage is co-operation. Senior-junior members with players from Elder High School presented two comedies, *Jenny Kissed Me*, given in October, and *Heaven Can Wait*, a December production. February brought the *Bright Lights of 1950-51*, a variety show. A large cast, especially such as a variety show requires, needs a make-up staff that can really work, an efficient stage-crew to handle lights and curtains promptly, prop men who are always ready and a director who can keep everyone alert. Seton Thespians work in each of these fields. The initiation ceremony and traditional exchange of nosegays among Senior members was a personal tribute to that spirit of co-operation. — *Dorothy Trageser, Reporter*

Manistee, Michigan (Thespian Troupe 73)

Our main production, *Charley's Aunt*, was presented before the public Feb-

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Thespian Troupe 822)

Oklahoma City is our home town,
At Central High School we'll receive
our cap and gown.
We, the members of Troupe 822,
Would like to tell you of our plans for
"52,"
And the things we did in "51"
That brought us lots of joy and fun.

We initiated twice last year,
And 36 members we now cheer.
"Why I Am a Bachelor"—the name of
our play,
Was given on an assembly day.

For "52" our plans really shine,
We'll give a party for St. Valentine.
We plan another assembly too,
In this new year of "52."

And now we bid you fond adieu,
We hope you too have fun in "52."
—Dolores Rickey, President

A QUARTETTE OF PLAYS FOR WOMEN

THE AMAZING ARABELLA. Comedy. By Norman Ashton. 5 women. Living room. 30 minutes. Price, 50 Cents
Greenfield, U.S.A. is a typical town. Katharine Fenwood will be recognized as a stock type leader in women's clubs activities. That's all that's average. Kate has a mother-in-law (Arabella) who loves murder stories which makes for wholesome, hilarious fun for any kind of ladies' get-togethers.

A DEBT TO PAY. By Lyda Nagel. 5 women. Royalty, \$5.00. Price, 50 Cents
While Mrs. Hunter is endowed with sufficient wealth to indulge her every whim, the one thing she seemingly wants most is to keep her daughter, Jerry, securely knotted in her way of life. The right-about-face is amazing when Jerry goes forward with wedding plans in spite of her mother's protestations.

FAMILY HEIRLOOM. Drama. By Charles H. Williamson. 4 women. Interior. 30 minutes. Price, 50 Cents
Rachel and Belle Morrison, two sisters, have lived together their entire lives. The chaos of a modern world pays little heed to the impracticality of dreams and memories, so the two sisters have been tossed by the waves of present day civilization from bad to worse. They still cling to memories and still shrouded in their dignity, they refuse charity until their dollarless purses permit it no longer.

A FAMILY AFFAIR. Comedy. By Marguerite K. Phillips. 10 women. Interior. Price, 75 Cents
Martha Kelsey, the stay-at-home daughter of a hard-to-live-with father, sees nothing ahead but drabness and loneliness. That is, 'til her father departed this earthly vale. Right then things changed. Back home trooped the family of daughters for the reading of their father's will. The old fellow had made his money chiefly in pigs — and how he disposes of his money makes for some really good comedy situations and lines.

BAKER'S PLAYS — BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ruary 22. Assembly programs were *The Haunted Suitcase*, *Thanksgiving a la Carte*, *Dickens' Christmas Carol*, *Mayor for a Day* and *Who Gets the Car Tonight*. The Troupe appeared before P.T.A. groups and took part in the Annual Play Festival at Central Michigan College, Mt. Pleasant. Members were cast in the A.A.U.W.'s civic production, *Pinnochio*. Seven new students joined the troupe this year. — *Marilee Lacey, Secretary*

Evanston, Wyoming (Thespian Troupe 514)

I Remember Mama was presented in the fall and well received by the public as was our spring production of *Blithe Spirit*, presented in March, also sponsored by Troupe 514. *Riders to the Sea* and a penthouse cutting of *Blithe Spirit* was presented at the State Speech Festival in April. Initiation of 25 new members was held at the February meeting. Following the initiation everyone enjoyed refreshments and singing. A group of Thespians attended productions of *Mr. Roberts* and *Life with Mother* in Salt Lake City, Utah, April 6th and 7th. Spring initiation and awards for dramatic achievement were held in May. — *Marion Maggard, Secretary*

Kansas City, Kansas (Thespian Troupe 162)

The Drama Department of Wyan-

dotte High School this year has put on three three-act plays, *A Little Honey*, *Seventeenth Summer*, and *Meet Me in St. Louis*. At Christmas time we put on two Cathedral Christmas Assemblies to two full auditoriums holding two thousand people. We also entertained a full auditorium of the city's poor children with the original play, *The Toy Shop*, written by our instructor. The Drama Department so far this year has put on 53 one-act plays. These are for student audiences and for different outside organizations. — *Nancy Davidson, President*

St. Edward, Nebraska (Thespian Troupe 1108)

During the year Troupe 1108 sponsored the three-act all school play, *One Foot in Heaven*. Also a local contest of three one-act plays was sponsored by the Thespians, which were: *Nobody Home*, *I Shall Be Waiting* and *Escape by Moonlight*. *Escape by Moonlight* was sent to district contest at Norfolk, Nebraska, on March 30. Miss Gayle Collins, the lead in this play, received best actress award. The play received superior rating. — *Thespian Reporter*

Davenport, Iowa (Thespian Troupe 654)

At first meeting of the Thespian Troupe 654 at Immaculate Conception Academy held in the latter part of October, the new Thespians were initiated. The senior members of the Thes-

pian Society gave some short talks concerning the theatre in general. One talk by Mary Pat Ryan was the trek of Cameos and Thespians this summer to Chicago to the biennial meeting of the National Catholic Theatre Conference of which I.C.A. is also a member. After the talks the Thespians-elect were officially enrolled into Thespian society. The pledge was taken and then the Thespians-elect put on the entertainment for the rest of the members. Following the entertainment all the Cameos and Thespians retired to the cafeteria for refreshments of coke and cake. —Yvonne McElroy, Secretary

Bristol, Tennessee
(Thespian Troupe 251)

Riders to the Sea, a one-act tragedy, was given by the Thespian Troupe 251 at the Carson-Newmen College Drama Festival on Dec. 8, under the direction of Mrs. Frances Spicer and student

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director Sally Ann Passmore. This dramatic production won first place over all other plays by an unanimous decision of the judges. The play was judged above the level of high school and college acting and directing. June Francis, Beverly Best, Mary Margaret Williams and David Torbett were rated outstanding in their portraying of characters.—Margery Peavler, President

Canton, Ohio
(Thespian Troupe 580)

Participation in the Ohio Regional Thespian Conference in October inaugurated the year's dramatic activities at Central Catholic. *Land of Sanctuary*—over the mike—entertained the school as a pre-Thanksgiving Day offering. Two appreciative audiences enjoyed *Unto the Least of These* on Dec. 21. The major production of the year, *Annie Laurie*, delighted and amazed several thousands in two public performances in January. In cooperation with the ANTA program, the Thespians observed ITM with the presentation of Synge's *Riders to the Sea* on March 16. The rollicking three-act *Katharina and Petruchio*—our May offering—tipped the halo on long-suffering Shakespeare.—Barbara Hosler, Secretary

Aurora, Nebraska
(Thespian Troupe 17)

Troupe 17 of the National Thespian Dramatic Honor Society for high school students held its formal dinner and initiation at the Methodist Church on Monday evening, May 14, at 6:30 o'clock. A delicious three-course dinner was served to approximately 50 including alumni, initiates, members and several guests. The tables were appointed with bowls of spring flowers and blue and yellow candles. The favors were in the form of pink and yellow tulips, and the placards were Thespian insignias. A program followed. Parents of the seniors were guests at the formal and informal initiation which followed. The initiates acquitted themselves creditably both in their poetry and the animated fairy tales in which they took part.—Doris Eckerson, President

Walters, Oklahoma
(Thespian Troupe 1138)

Troupe 1138 was granted a charter on May 22, 1951. Fifteen charter members were installed by Lawton Troupe 935 in an impressive ceremony. We had a busy year before our charter was obtained. Our first play last year was *Our Town*, sponsored by the Dramatics Club. Later came the Junior play, *Next Door Neighbors*, a three-act comedy. In the spring the Senior Class presented *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Our one-act play, *Nobody Sleeps*, was rated "one" at district tournament and received a "two" at state. On Nov. 7 of this year we initiated two new members, giving our Troupe a total of eight. At present we are working on our All School Play, *The Man Who Came to*

Dinner, directed by our sponsor, Mrs. Jane Bradford.—Jueretta Brannon, Secretary

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Scenery: Three sets. Cast: Three women, seven men.

THE WONDERFUL TANG by Beaumont Bruestle.

Stylized Chinese play, built around a fantastic tale of three suitors who come to prove their prowess in order to win the hand of the Emperor's daughter. Fleeing with the suitor of her choice, the unpretentious student Tang, the Princess is pursued by the Emperor's army, but is welcomed back when Tang is able to subdue the fierce dragon of the Khan of Tartary, by twisting its tail. Novel, deadpan comedy provided by the Property Man and Chorus.

Scenery: Bare stage, set with Chinese property set pieces. Cast: Six women, eight men, extras.

ARTHUR AND THE MAGIC SWORD.

Told in modern terms by the narration of Merlin the Magician, this grippingly theatrical dramatization of Arthur and the Sword makes no pretense of being historical, yet succeeds in giving a twentieth-century view of an exciting situation in sixth-century England.

Scenery: Three sets. Cast: Three women, nine men, two boys, one girl, extras.

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DIALING

(Continued from page 19)

the drawing is in blacks and whites with the human gray fringe areas.

Speaking of humans, let's look at some of the persons in and behind the show.

Fran, who studied music and drama, began her radio career as a singer and might have continued along those lines but for a waggish announcer on a small station in Iowa. He interrupted a news program one day to remark, "Why, here's Aunt Fanny; step up to the mike and speak to the folks." Several years as a teacher had taught the already quick-witted Miss Allison to cope with brashness and so, with monumental calm, she created out of thin air one of the most famous roles in radio. A native of Iowa, Fran had long treasured small town idiom and she put it to good use that morning; for five minutes she harangued a la small town gossip. The customers loved it and from then on her singing career slowly retreated before the popularity of the rural conversationalist. Her school teaching stood her in good stead when she was introduced to Kukla and Ollie—her gentle patience and quiet humor with the roguish Ollie and the earnest Kukla bind them into an endearing triumvirate which has gained thousands of fans since "K., F. and O." went on the air.

Burr Tillstrom, as creator of the show, feels particularly indebted to Fran for

her complete sympathy with the program. "She is one of the most sincere, heartwarming persons in show business," he says. "Her great understanding and love for people of all ages are reflected in her work and inspire everyone connected with the show."

Jack Fascinato, one of the busiest and most versatile musicians in Chicago, joined "K., F. and O." the day the musicians' ban was lifted and hasn't missed a show since. Jack is known to the public for his work on "K., F. and O.," which includes more than 60 original songs written just for the show. But there is scarcely a radio listener who hasn't heard Jack's music in one form or another. When Burr and Fran make records for RCA Victor, Jack not only makes all the arrangements but conducts the orchestra as well. Before joining "K., F. and O.," Jack was pianist for the bands of Louis Panico and Dick Jurgens. He arranged music for shows on all four major networks and for artists, such as Curt Massey and the Dining Sisters. He arranged for Orrin Tucker and Abe Lyman, and for the musical show, *Hot Mikado*. When Kukla and Ollie call Jack "King of the singing commercials," they aren't fooling. Jack's songs haven't made the Hit Parade as yet, but they are among those most frequently played on radio. He regularly does music for singing spots for a dozen large advertising agencies.

To most fans of *Kukla, Fran and*

Ollie, Gommy is a mysterious, slightly metallic voice from behind the camera who occasionally consults with Kukla during the show about lights, camera angles, and the most advantageous position to photograph Ollie's tooth. To dispel some of the mystery, Gommy is Lewis Gomavitz, director of the show. Gommy is responsible for the technical side of getting "K., F. and O." on the air. He sits in a sound-proof control room at the rear of the studio and directs the cameramen, floorman and the lighting. When he talks to Kukla or Ollie during the show, his voice comes out of the control room via a loud speaker. Gommy was a television director at station WBKB, Chicago, when "K., F. and O." made their TV debut in October, 1947. With producer Beulah Zachary, Gommy directed the first show, and has been in the control room ever since.

Mr. Tillstrom first brought his "K., F. and O." presentation to television in October of 1947. That means that he is a pioneer in the medium. In the four and a half years since then there have been many imitators. You can watch TV and see marionettes galore. (By using them the payment of additional salaries for big casts is avoided.) But in none of the shows can you find the sort of maturity, originality and good taste shown here. It is the duty of "K., F. and O." viewers to keep this show from fading gradually into oblivion.

THEATRE

(Continued from page 18)

with this dramatist's *Desire under the Elms*. In their *History of the Theatre*, George Freedley and John A. Reeves remind us of the public indignation which greeted this play when it was first presented in 1924. They call it "one of O'Neill's best plays." Those responsible for the ANTA plays are to be congratulated for arranging that the play be seen again. Carol Stone and Karl Malden are in the ANTA production—as is Douglas Watson. For more about that young actor turn to my piece on "Up and Coming" players on another page of this issue of DRAMATICS.

Samuel Taylor, who adapted the tawdry *The Happy Time*, is responsible for the recent adaptation of Andre Roussin's *Nina*. In the recent instance, I do feel that Mr. Taylor evoked all the good he could from the original play. *Nina* is nothing more than old-hat French bedroom farce. Nothing new has been added but much has been taken away. There are the usual double entendres, the scuttling about of husbands and wives and lovers, the mistaken identity, the chic costuming and setting.

Gloria Swanson figured as the only

distaff member of a cast of four. Her cohorts were David Niven, Alan Webb and William Lenassena. Alan Webb did the most to rescue the evening from routine and tedium, but the banality of the script was too much for him. He made a most appealing figure of the wronged husband, but the odds were against him. I had expected Gloria Swanson at least to appear quite breathtaking, but the evening we attended she was badly out-of-pressure. *Nina* was too much of too little.

There has been a vogue of play titles consisting of only a lady's first name. In addition to the aforementioned *Nina* we have *Gigi* (The Anita Loos dramatization of a novel by Colette) and we are soon to receive Enid Bagnold's *Gertie*. *I Am a Camera* was known as *Sally Bowles* during its early stages.

For many years George S. Kaufman in association with Moss Hart, comprised one of the top American playwriting teams. Most of us recall their *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *You Can't Take It with You* and a long list of others. Lately George S. has endeavored to collaborate with his wife, Leueen MacGrath, but the old magic seems to have vanished. Last season their *The Small Hours* suffered a dismal fate. Their

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new work, *Fancy Meeting You Again*, has just dared the critical blast. It has been rather sorely treated and it would be quite surprising if it can long survive.

The producers of *South Pacific* are trying a most interesting experiment. We have heard for many years about the woes of the playgoer who resides in the suburbs. He had to waste two hours in the city between the office and the overture and then tear for the 11:30 to get home before dawn. The new plan raises the curtain of *South Pacific* every Monday evening at 7:00. It will be interesting to see how audiences react to this plan. Perhaps it will lead to a system whereby each attraction will have an early curtain one night each week. The audience is at least getting the consideration it deserves.

We have passed the half-way point of the season. There has been woefully little thus far that is genuinely exciting. There have been many good performances but the dramaturgy of the season is a very weak point. Let us hope that the second half of the season will redeem this serious defect. The Off-Broadway theatre has been much less active than in recent seasons. Equity-Library is under way but most of the promising groups seem to be in the throes of reorganization. With the spring we may start to sow the benefits of the current hibernation.

I am glad that I am not in the position of having to cite awards for work thus far. One would be hard-pressed to provide satisfactory nominations. Perhaps we should borrow a slogan from the recent Hollywood-sponsored campaign. "The theatre is better than ever" should become our watchword and then we shall have to urge those in responsible positions to make it so.



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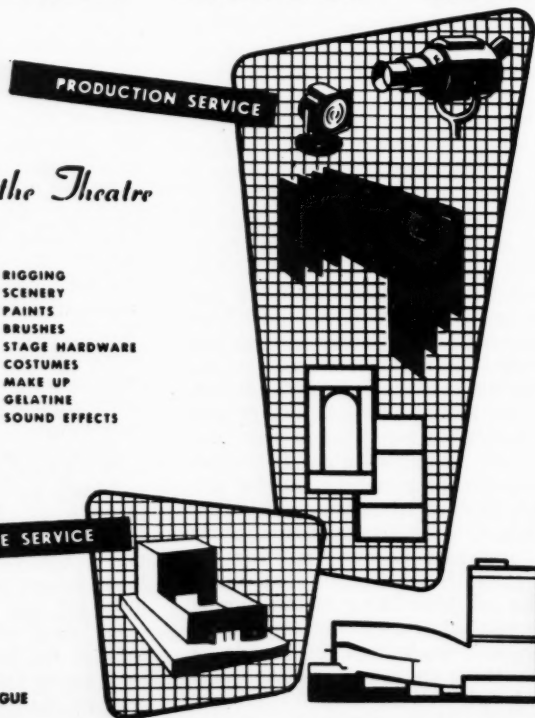
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UP AND COMING

(Continued from page 12)

Orchard. This rise to fame had been accomplished within three seasons, but let us look at what had gone into Douglas Watson's theatre background. Born in Georgia in 1921, Douglas Watson studied for the stage at the University of North Carolina and at Maria Ouspenskaya's theatre school. During World War II he served as a bombardier in the United States Army Air Force completing forty-two combat missions. He was wounded twice in action and was awarded the Air Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross and two Purple Hearts. Following his discharge, he danced briefly in Martha Graham's company. His New York debut as an actor took place in the fall of 1947 in the production of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, in which Godfrey Tearle and Katharine Cornell played the title roles. This is the same play which is alternating with Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* at the Ziegfeld Theatre. The role was Eros, the soldier, who chooses suicide rather than kill his general as commanded. It is a good bit and Mr. Watson played it commendably. Several of the aisle-sitters commented favorably upon his presence.

Though this was the first notice he evoked from the New York Drama Critics' Circle, Douglas had played an important role in a touring company of *The Iceman Cometh*. He had been chosen for the role by Eugene O'Neill—assuredly the highest accolade. He had appeared, too, in two other Shakespeare revivals: *The Winter's Tale* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

After the closing of *Antony*, Watson returned to the Air Force. This time, however, his station was the stage of the Fulton Theatre—as a replacement in the cast of *Command Decision*. This was the excellent play about air warfare during World War II, which has more recently been seen as a film. In the play Paul Kelly did a superb job in the leading role.

The next engagement was rather short-lived. It was in Ruth Gordon's *The Leading Lady*, and it kept Douglas Watson employed for only eight per-

formances. This quickie was followed by the aforementioned award winning appearances. Last winter the most important assignment of Mr. Watson's fairly brief career was given him. He was selected to play Romeo opposite Olivia De Havilland in the late Dwight Deere Wiman's production of Shakespeare's tragedy of the "star crossed lovers."

Another promising young player is Bethel Leslie, who also appeared in *The Wisteria Trees*. Miss Leslie has been chosen as a protegee by Helen Hayes, and has played in the latter's productions of *Mary Rose* and *Alice Sit by the Fire*. When the aforementioned

Barrie play was revived by Helen Hayes for the American National Theatre and Academy Play Series last March, Bethel Leslie was seen in the title role.

While still in her senior year at New York's Brearley School—at the age of 17—she played in *Years Ago* with Florence Eldridge and Fredric March. At this time she already had two Broadway appearances to her credit—brief roles in *Snafu* and in *The Dancer*. In addition to many radio engagements, the next few years brought her roles in *How I Wonder* and *Goodbye, My Fancy*. It had been announced that Miss Leslie would be a member of the cast of *The Brass Ring*, but this play has been withdrawn for rewriting. Let us hope that a suitable role comes her way in the near future. A writer, a composer, a musician can perfect their art in solitude but an actor needs a production and an audience to acquire technique and artistry.

These "up and coming" players have acquired a foothold, but must work continuously to fortify their position. They cannot rely upon securing good roles under proper directors. They must attend classes, learn new roles, watch older and experienced actors at work, keep their names before producers and playwrights and directors. It is a constant grind, but with talent, endurance and lots of smiling fortune new players do make the grade.

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BUILDING

(Continued from page 11)

give as much participation as possible to all students. Last summer two complete evenings of drama projects were staged. Parents, friends, students of the university and teachers filled the Speech Auditorium to overflowing on these occasions. The first night a group of one-act shows was given. These were four in number, directed by the instructors in Acting of the Institute. The second night a series of scenes from longer shows and some original adaptations were presented. These were done under the supervision of Institute directors with assistants from Dr. Lee Mitchell's group in Directing from the University Theatre. Full length productions have not been produced recently because they do not provide as much opportunity for participation and learning among all the members of the Drama Division, which is usually the largest section of the Institute. Two public programs of interpretative readings were also given. A major number of drama students took roles in the annual luncheon program given as a special feature of the Speech luncheon series of the University. Thus dramatics students, as well as those in the other two divisions, participated extensively in both classroom and co-curricular activities.

The daily schedule is a full one. Classes begin at 8:30 A.M. and close at 4:30 P.M. Free time for recreation and individual pursuits follows until dinner. Food is excellent, being prepared by regular chefs of the University dining service; boys eat at Sargent Hall in the new men's dormitory restaurant; girls are fed at the Northwestern Apartments dining room. Sundays offer an opportunity for both groups to eat together. After dinner hours on school nights find study hours, library work and rehearsals the regular order of business. Social affairs, trips and special events occupy the week-end evenings. Longer excursions are often taken on Saturdays. All trips are supervised by faculty members, transportation being provided on chartered buses. Pupils are so occupied that there is no occasion for their leaving the campus on week-ends; parents and friends are welcome as visitors.

Last summer members of the Institute attended two University Theatre productions; the performance of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Ravinia Park; *South Pacific*; a tour through Mutual broadcasting studios; a tour of the Chicago Art Institute, the Field Museum, the Shedd Aquarium; the Summer Session lecture series; two informal mixers and dances; and a fine formal dinner and dance at the Northwestern University Golf Club, at which scholarship awards and diplomas were given. Students contributed original en-

tertainment at the final party, which also featured sketches by a well-known radio and television actress.

Personal relationships between faculty and students are unusual. Both look forward to class sessions. Outstanding secondary school teachers, college instructors and regular members of the School of Speech faculty are among those whose universal comment regarding the Institute is typified by such a remark as this: "This is the most stimulating teaching experience I have ever had." The students remember their "profs" as evidenced by this comment by one of the counselors: "It's a full time job answering my Cherub correspondence during the winter!" And the pupils without reservation vote the summer's work "the most wonderful experience of my life," and add, "I learned more in five weeks than I learned in four years back home." Allowing for teen-age enthusiasm, such statements are indicative of a faculty-student relationship which approaches the ideal. There is no problem of discipline, no problem of attendance or tardiness. The chief difficulty comes in seeing that pupils get to bed and stay in bed so that they will have the necessary rest to do the things they so eagerly desire to learn. Not uncommon is the experience of the dormitory counselor, who after "tucking in the flock," returned to find several youngsters with flashlights, working on speeches, readings or scripts under improvised "sheet tents." The general attitude is not "I dare you to teach me that," but rather "What can I learn today that will help me?" Materials developed by the staff and students of the Institute have had national use, and it is a constant secretarial job after each session to answer the inquiries of teachers in the field regarding plays, outlines, units of work and programs which have been done at the Institute during the previous summer.

The dormitory situation offers unique opportunities for student government with its accompanying development of

initiative and responsibility. Officers and committees plan and carry out dormitory regulations (which are few in number), parties, trips, special programs and exchange dinners. Such ventures offer conditions for creative work which can be carried into class and activity units. By far the greatest by-product of such group work, however, is the development of an *esprit de corps* unequalled in such an educational undertaking. Friendships and loyalties originated here endure for years beyond the dates of the sessions. Individual horizons are broadened by contacts with students from different localities and attitudes of understanding and tolerance so important in our job of living are fostered in an unusual manner. Institute members get a strong and firm foundation in the business of living with others in a very real way.

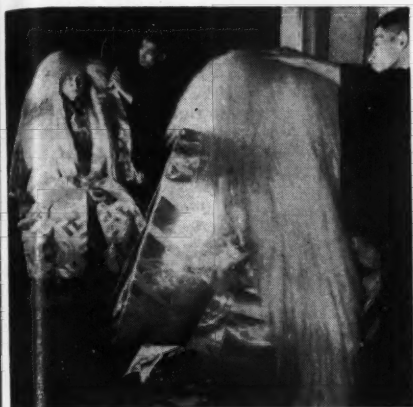
Not the least of the values of the summer experience is the opportunity given all students to try their wings in a college environment by doing work which meets a high standard of achievement. Principals, parents and teachers receive a descriptive report which tells them of the way in which their boys and girls have met the situation. These furnish an ideal type of preview for prospective college students. They are part of University life; they live in University dormitories; they have classes in University buildings; they use University facilities and equipment—stage, studios, library, beaches, Union building, athletic plant, swimming pool and dining services. They attend University functions related to their interests; they come face-to-face with University instructors who have a serious interest in the orientation, exploration and guidance of these high school juniors; they develop useful work habits; they learn to make decisions and take responsibilities under their own power. The emphasis throughout the five weeks by faculty and administration is upon the good, solid core of University education, not upon the superficialities too often emphasized by the motion picture, the television program, or by shallow-minded types of undergraduates. Twenty-one years of experience has shown that this summer course of five weeks gives direction and purpose to those who attend. The files are filled with the names of those who have gone on to professional success in theater, radio, law, education and the lecture platform. However, these are far outnumbered by the hundreds who have gained an orientation to the meaning of their speech training in general education so that they might use it, enjoy its recreation and stimulation in building lives satisfying to themselves and useful to the other men and women with whom they live in our society. The National High School Institute in Speech is truly a force in building a higher type of American womanhood and manhood.

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A dresser prepares the wig of a Kabuki actor getting ready to play the part of a lion in one of the legendary dramas presented by the Kabuki troupe.

JAPAN

(Continued from page 9)

prefer pageantry to serious drama. As a matter of fact, straight dramas as we know them are lacking in Japan. A few ambitious groups present translations of Western plays but originals in our form are few . . . and very poorly written. It is doubted that Western Drama will ever appeal to a mass audience in Japan due to the basic cultural differences.

Classical ballet and opera have been imported to Japan with limited success. A number of ballet troupes have sprung

up since the end of the war, but they are of such low standards that most Americans will not find them of any interest. The same is true of the classical opera troupes. The singers are poorly trained, the acting, bad enough at the Met in New York, is really comical here. The chief reason for this failure is that the producers of ballet and opera insist on importing Western methods of staging, as well as the music and stories, instead of using native subjects and scores. The artists, accustomed as they are to the pageantry and broadness found in Japanese theatre, are inclined to give their performances too much emphasis. Their acting and singing just doesn't blend with European classical theatre.

The movies are struggling to keep their heads above water financially at the present time. Their chief difficulty is that they cannot compete with American and European imports. The average movie goer in Japan considers Patricia Neal, Bette Davis, Robert Taylor and Van Johnson more important than their own stars. This is easily understood when you view a native production. Working in primitive studios that don't even have a heating system, using scripts that are written by people who are not trained in the medium, the producers are turning out definitely inferior products. However, with the coming of a peace treaty and



The lion dance is very famous in Kabuki theatre. Masks are used in Kabuki plays that have been incorporated from the ancient Noh dramas.

more trade in Japan, technical equipment will be imported and the producers are hoping to be able to compete soon with the foreign films.

Even though an American in Japan is primarily limited to Kabuki and Takarazuka dramas for his native theatre, he will find these two experiences well worthwhile. No one can see a colorful Kabuki drama or witness a grand musical review at Takarazuka without realizing he is seeing something new and different to the Western mind. And it will be a long time before he has forgotten the beauty, the spectacle that is native theatre in Japan.

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By Donald Payton. "Finders Creepers" is definitely the grandest and most amusing mystery comedy we have ever published — it's a scream from start to finish for young and old. This play has no weak spots — every act is good — every moment is exciting. 100% clean entertainment. Very easily produced with one easy setting.

Perhaps they didn't know when they were well off, or maybe they were just gluttons for punishment, but Hercules Nelson's uncle and aunt had long wanted him to come spend a week end with them. And to top it off, they even went so far as to say he could bring his bosom pal, Wilbur Maxwell. So with suitcases in hand, the boys arrive at Uncle Bob's, set for a big week end. That's putting it mildly indeed because Hercules knows his uncle has taken a new job, but what he doesn't know until it's too late is that uncle is a mortician. That's right, an undertaker. Needless to say, the boys are terrified. They're all for heading home pronto, especially when they find there's another "guest" in the house, an old boy named Jason Quigley who — "ran out of gas." His funeral's to be Monday. But then Wilbur spots Celeste, Herc's cousin, and boom — just like that — decides to stay. Well, it's not long till things start happening in ways that would put most brave men to flight. For one thing, Mr. Quigley, the "guest," walks around, reads the paper and climbs into bed with Hercules. He gallivants around in a most uncorpus delecti fashion. The boys are mortally terrified. But they haven't seen anything yet. Mr. Quigley isn't really dead. Someone tried to do away with him while he was asleep,

so he evolved a plan: He'd make his family think he was dead, then show up at his own funeral and trap the guilty party. Now Herc's for leaving — until he sees Nina, the "deceased's" grand-daughter and boom, "just like that," he decides to stay. Well, no doubt Mr. Quigley had a good plan, and no doubt things would have ended peacefully, but there're two things he failed to reckon with: Wilbur Maxwell and Hercules Nelson. They set out to solve the case and matters soon go from bad to worse to terrible. Hercules tips off Nina that her Grandpop's alive, she tips off the family, and everything's messed up. Uncle Bob is implicated and mistakenly carted off to the klink, and the boys finally come face to face with the culprit, after first getting everyone out of the house who could help them. The boys finally escape with their necks, but not before one of the wildest finishes ever. Here's a play chock-full of choice comedy parts: Little sister Frankie who loves mystery thrillers; Daphne the maid, who's always lowering the boom on old Claudie, the caretaker; and live-wire Granny, who with hep cat, Mr. Quigley, keeps the whole joint jumpin' in this well-paced, rib-tickling mystery comedy, with an emphatic accent on the comedy.

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BRIEF VIEWS

SAMUEL FRENCH
New York and Hollywood

Too Many Dates, a comedy in three acts by Marjorie and Joseph Hayes. Louanne Miller is just off with the old but not yet on with the new. A quarrel with her boy friend has left her without escort for the next evening and she agrees to a blind date urged upon her by three girl friends. Unfortunately she has also promised to baby-sit the same evening and has to talk her father into pinch-hitting by looking after the neighbors' infant. The complications may be imagined. Moreover not one but three blind dates appear, including her discarded boy friend, and the fun starts in earnest. The parents not only keep their heads but exhibit a sense of humor which is helpful. The cast is well-balanced, eight of each kind, and the set is the usual domestic interior which gives no trouble. The baby does not appear.

Ghost Road, a mystery-melodrama in three acts by Bill Johnson. The scene is a long-deserted stagecoach station in Arizona, which was once notorious for a violent Indian massacre and is therefore regarded as a haunted area. A bus load of tourists are stranded near by during a sandstorm and, knowing nothing of the history of the place, they shelter themselves there. Then the ghosts get to work. An old prospector, straight from a Western movie, drops in and explains the weird happenings, thereby adding to the terror of the tourists. But there is one courageous soul in the party, a mystery man who undertakes to get to the bottom of the trouble and finds a logical explanation just before the fall of the curtain. Not before guns have gone off, arrows have been shot and a number of colorful characters have paraded across the melodramatic scene. Five men and six women make up the cast.

The Velvet Glove, comedy in 3 acts, by Rosemary Casey. This is the tender, sympathetic play which won the Christopher Award two years ago, played on Broadway by a top-notch cast headed by Grace George and Walter Hampden. A young history instructor in a convent school has been incautiously liberal in some of his remarks to the class. The Bishop commands that he be fired, but the Mother Superior, aided by the wise old Monsignor, contrives to outwit the Bishop and compels him to reverse the decision. Some of the characters are "from stock" but the theme is timely and the picture of Catholic life is richly understanding.

When *Shakespeare's Ladies Sing*, a comedy operetta in one act; book, lyrics and music by Charles George; 12 f. and chorus; royalty, \$10.00. Designed to be presented indoors or outdoors, and with some clever lyrics deriving rather clearly from Shakespeare's own verses, this play should be acceptable material for an all-girl production. The plot is unimportant; the music is uninspired but tuneful. It is not the greatest piece of operatic construction, but it reads as though it may be playable and instructive.

THE NORTHWESTERN PRESS
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Radio Scripts for Practice and Broadcast by Melvin R. White. This useful manual contains, in addition to the promised scripts, a brief discussion of good speech as it applies to radio announcing and radio dialogue. It is good commonsense. The scripts themselves range all the way from shrewd adaptations

By TALBOT PEARSON

of classic short stories to originals; comedy, drama and romantic dialogue items all appear. No space is wasted on discussion of studio technique, but there is complete sound and music decoration to the pages of several authentic professional scripts reproduced by permission of the big broadcasting chains. The beginning producer or actor can see for himself just how the "Big Boys" did, and will continue to do it. Very worthwhile text.

THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY
Chicago, Illinois

The Thursday Murders, adapted by John McGreevey from the book by Craig Rice; three acts; 6 m., 9 f.; a shanty on the outskirts of Thursday, Iowa; royalty, \$10.00 - \$25.00. This play is a capable dramatization of one of the best-known of Miss Rice's whodunits built around her two photo-sleuths, Bingo Riggs and Handsome Kusak. On their way to Hollywood the two adventurers run over an errant turkey and offer to reimburse the owner. From this well-intentioned gesture arise the inevitable complications: they buy the turkey farm, dream of sudden riches, discover bodies in the outhouses and run into the strangest assortment of Riceian characters, all very local and all very confused. None of this is to be taken too seriously, and no lovable personalities get "bumped off," and the whole thing moves fast and ludicrously to an excellent climax.

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Panic on a Pullman, a comedy in three acts by Albert M. Brown and Hugh Coryell; 5 m., 8 f., extras; the lounge of a transcontinental train. Linda Bradley is being seen off to her freshman year at college by an anxious mother. But Linda has already spied two personable youths and maternal warnings against casual acquaintances get a poor hearing. Other passengers crowd in and complicate the journey, including a couple of escaped convicts, supposedly under guard. A romantic young professor becomes the hero and no harm is done in spite of some attempted mayhem and lots of thrills. There is a real detective too.

ONE ACT PLAYS
ROW, PETERSON AND COMPANY
Evanston, Illinois

Silver Wedding by Alice Sankey; 5 m., 8 f.; living room of the Corrigan home. Unknown to Joe and Margaret Corrigan, wedded for 25 years, a national radio program is going to stage a surprise interview in their house. Barbara Corrigan and her beau Bob are in the secret and have arranged for the parents to be away in order to get the lines and the microphone set up. After he and Margaret return home, Joe is cross because he wanted to see a movie, and an old argument about the grandfather clock makes a bad start for the Silver Wedding broadcast. Just when the situation looks hopeless, the clock falls, nearly striking Margaret. Joe carries her to the sofa and, in his relief that she has not been killed, says things that the script writers could not have bettered. Following the successful broadcast, an avalanche of presents comes from the sponsors.

Mr. Vincent by Mari Sec; 3 m., 4 f.; Graham living room, turned into a shrine to Vincent Van Gogh by Penelope Graham, a young art student. Penny has been sent to town with her younger sister Susan to buy a dress for the dance that night. Susan returns to say she has lost Penny somewhere. Eventually Penny returns with a roll of painter's canvas but no new dress. She has seen and followed a young man who strangely resembles Van Gogh's self-portrait. The young man shows up, revealing himself as a fellow art student, made up to resemble Vincent, in the hope of making Penny see the live people in the world around her. So she dances in an old dress, but with a new date and some improvement in her sense of proportion.

Mystery of Mouldy Manor by Ted Westgate; 4 m., 5 f.; living room in the Charles Adams manner, complete with giant cobwebs, operating table, statue with eyes that light up and other assorted effects. This is a farce-parody on horror-thrillers designed to end all such. The play contains every known device from the mad doctor and the girl with a pet cobra, through a fabulous ruby and an upstanding young detective. The broadest possible kind of farce.

Sons of the Prairie by Herbert Adrian Rehner; choral drama; 10 m., 2 f. Chorus, dance, music and choral speech combine with solo voices to tell the story of the prairie. It begins with the uninhabited land, goes through the time of the buffalo and the Indian, the first white settlers, the period of industrial growth and the gradual passing of the prairie.

BAKER'S PLAYS
Boston, Massachusetts

Opportunity Unlimited by Walter Hackett; 4 m., 3 f.; a classroom. Jack Stevenson is valedictorian and has prepared a rather gloomy oration on the theme: "Where do we go from here?" His friends, and a world-famous physicist who is also on the program, talk some good commonsense to him. He revises his outlook, switches his emphasis and delivers a message of hope and confidence. Despite the serious tone, this is recommended as valid and timely.

To Thine Own Self by Helen L. Kroner; 5 w.; a hospital room. This is a soundly written fragment with an idea that is thoroughly sound. It is propaganda but the right kind. It clarifies muddy idealism and propounds a life principle. It must be classified as a "religious" play, but there is nothing maudlin about it.

The Soldier City by Helen Waite Munro; narrator, two girls, one boy and a chorus; no scenery required. This recounts the story of a little Florida town from its beginning in the early part of the last century through the last war. Plenty of singing, history made easy, good inspirational finish. An excellent item to bear in mind for Memorial Day.

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